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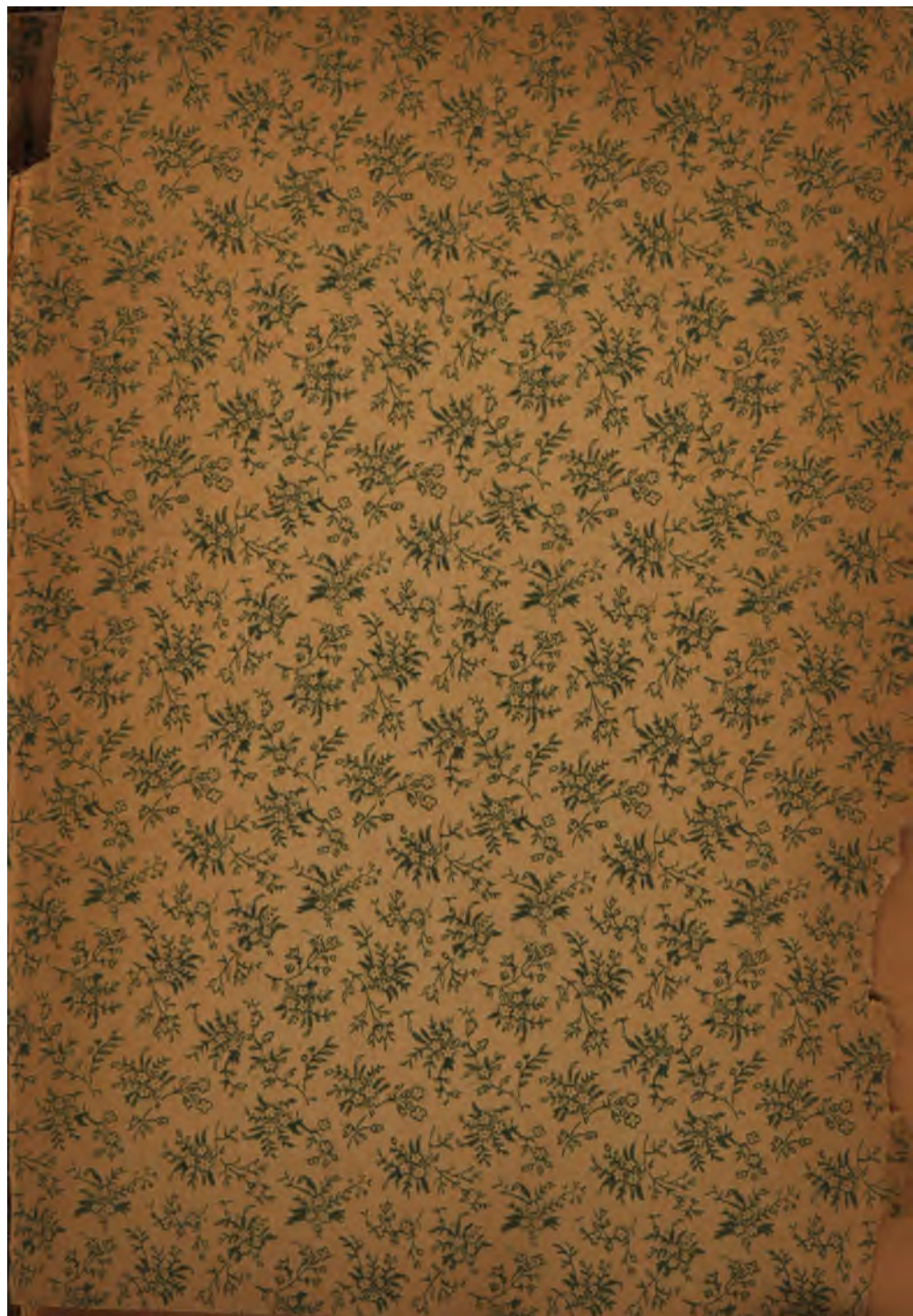
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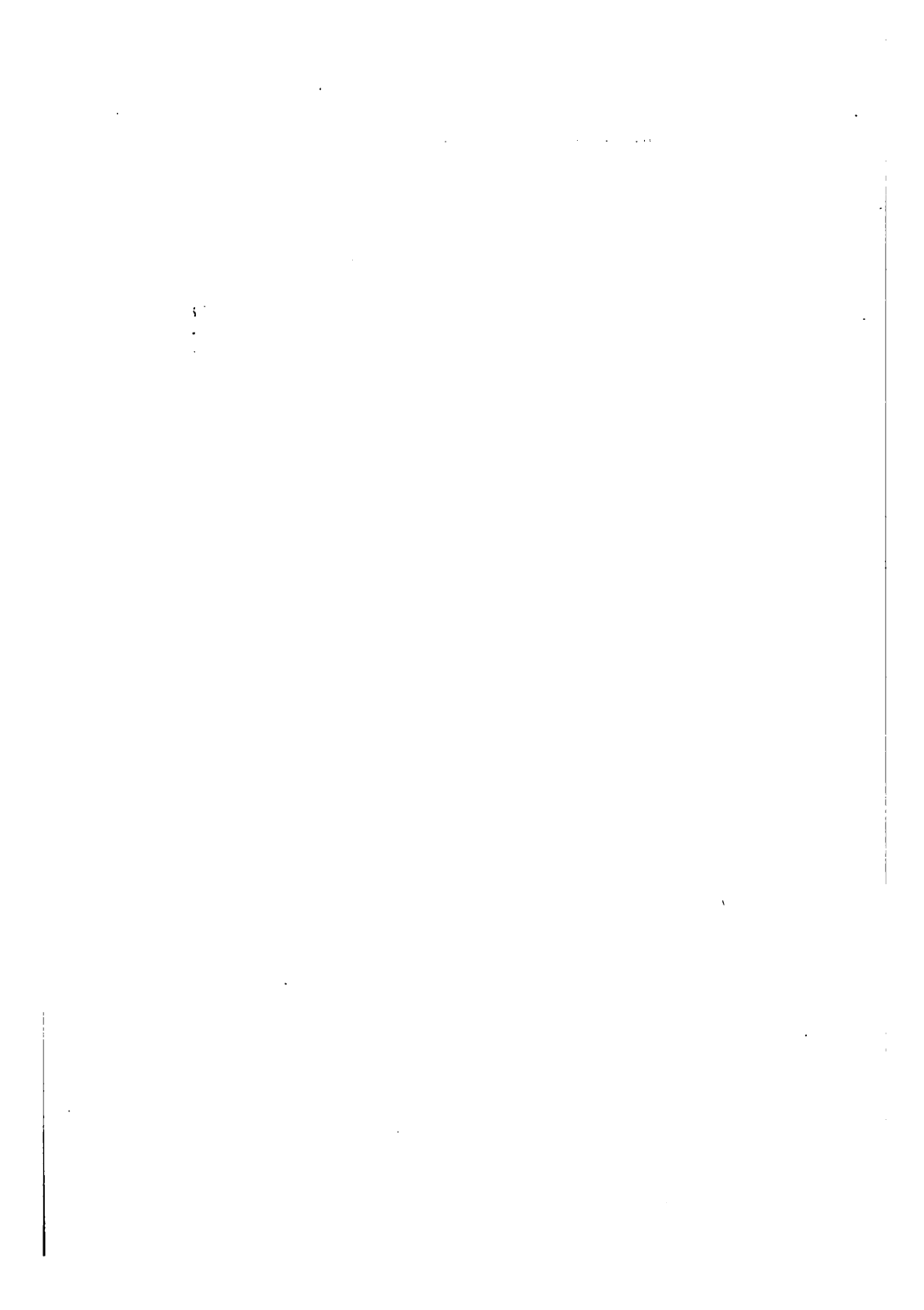


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IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH

ESSAYS

BY

YOUNGER MINISTERS OF THE UNITARIAN CHURCH

With an Introduction

BY THE REV. JAMES DE NORMANDIE

"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."—*John iv. 23, 24.*

• BOSTON

GEO. H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET

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By GEO. H. ELLIS

1893

PREFACE.

THE writers of this little book have aimed to speak out of their lives rather than out of their libraries. They therefore make no apology for the appearance of these essays. For every earnest word out of life is a needed and helpful word. Each writer is responsible for his own essay, and for his only. But the united prayer of all the writers is that this, their book, may lead those who read it to a better understanding of the *religious* life of our beloved Church, and so to that great union of the whole Christian Church for which all Christians do now most truly pray.

THE EDITORS.

BOSTON, January 1, 1893.

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INTRODUCTION.

THIS little volume represents a constructive tendency among the younger ministers of the Unitarian Church. It also shows what has frequently been asserted in the present disturbed condition of the sects, with no reasonable denial: that, with all the liberty of thought and the individuality which have marked this body, there is a unity in variety which cannot be claimed in the other denominations.

All the differences which disturbed the counsels of the Free Church a quarter of a century ago are lost in an earnest and united effort to discover the best way by which the religious needs of the present generation can be met. The terms "radical" and "conservative" are unheard: the occupation of the heresy-hunter has gone into other folds.

It represents the tendency of association among us. More than sixty years ago Dr. Channing published an article on association which for a long time directed the sentiment of the Free Church, a suspicion of every kind of organization,—a fear lest it might hamper the freedom of the individual and keep him from forming an independent and reasonable judgment. The great purpose of

society, in his view, was to call forth private and moral freedom. That battle has been fought. The great purpose of society to-day is to call forth every effort for that union which is to encourage moral growth, to fix the mind and heart upon present evils rather than future salvation, and to interpret Christianity as a religion which is to concern itself chiefly about the regeneration of humanity by personal righteousness.

It represents a tendency away from negations and criticisms to a religion of positive assertions, to the life of the Spirit. We do not admit that the preaching of Channing and his early followers was not positive and constructive; but every departure from a popular faith seems, for a time, to be a matter of denials. No true reformer wishes to take away anything until he is perfectly assured of something better in its place; but the adherents of the old tremble at the thought of what is to be given up, and cannot look with an unprejudiced view at what is to be introduced. That often seems destruction which is development, as it requires a keen vision to see the germ of the bud which is to replace the fallen leaf. For a long time the controversy in the early days of the Liberal Church could not even state the new doctrines without appearing to be in antagonism to the old; and so it was a time of negations, of denials. In proclaiming the Unity, there was a rejection of the Trinity; in showing the human element in the Bible, there was a rejection of plenary infallibility; in asserting the value of reason, there was an attack upon the author-

ity of the Church ; in the study of comparative religion, there was a blow to the cherished idea that Christianity was the only religion ; in welcoming the results of science, there was an overthrow of the theologian's artificial distinction between natural and revealed religion. It was a hard battle at every step, but each of these positions has been won by the Liberal Church. The doctrines of the popular theology, in the terms by which they were expressed a century ago, are as antiquated among thoughtful persons as the Ptolemaic system. All religious bodies are following the paths we have gone over, for the movement is a part of the divine plan which knows no retrogression. The views for which the Free Church has contended seem here to have a more positive and devout tone, because the trend of thought is everywhere in this direction.

It is this changed atmosphere which can permit the liberal minds of all sects to accept as unreservedly as they surely will the conclusions of the first essay on "The Philosophy of Religion." There is here all the emphasis of Channing on the supreme place of reason, there is the sure but reverent overthrow of the false and pernicious barrier between natural and revealed, or natural and supernatural, religion ; but one finds all the time the spirit of construction instead of denial, emphasis upon the spiritual, and belief in it upon the same foundation as in the material. All lines of separation vanish, but the transcendent power of the spiritual remains.

The same reason can alone explain the cordial ap-

proval which will be given to the two essays on "The Thought of God in the Bible" and "The Bible as Literature and Revelation." There is no shrinking from all the issues fought for in years past against the verbal inspiration or the infallibility of the Scriptures; there is ample acknowledgment of all the results the higher criticism may bring; there is no hesitation to look upon the Scriptures as literature and history, not different in kind from what the world has elsewhere known, not as the one word of God apart from all his other words. But we are on a plateau of a higher appreciation of them, where criticisms about errors in history or science or morals are lost in the thought of their progressive revelations of God, in the story of souls trying to know and obey him, having faith in him and loving him. When I was a boy, I rarely heard a text from the Old Testament, because it was held that the New Testament contained the only authority or religion for a Christian; but now we find no line divides the Old from the New, the story of development takes them both in. There is only an ever-unfolding of the thought of God, and we come away with the impression that the Bible has rightfully a deeper hold upon us than ever.

"The Revelation of God in Nature" reaches far above the mere thought of beauty or rapture in the material universe to the soul in nature, and tenants creation with the Creator, as the human frame is directed by a spirit within. All the help which a part of our being has found in the mystery of the Trinity, or of enigmatical dogmas,

is found in a far higher degree in what Huxley calls the "orderly mystery" of nature; but the deepest truth is that there is little devotion found in these outward temples, unless one carries into them the faith and devotion found at other altars.

"The Revelation of God in Man" is a sweet plea for the dignity of human nature as the seat of the highest revelation of the Infinite.

The two essays which will strike the reader as being somewhat outside the tone of the Free Church are those on "The Christ" and "The Use of a Liturgy in Worship"; but the difference is more apparent than real, and has its ample justification in that variety of opinion which may accompany the unity of the spirit.

There is in the former no departure from the usual emphasis among us of the humanity of Jesus; and the approval of the Nicene Creed in regard to the nature of Jesus is, I take it, only to maintain the same truth of every human being,—that he is not like God, but is a part of God, of the same divine nature. That truth is, perhaps, better expressed wherever one has come to the idea of the fatherhood of God. We cannot quarrel with the phraseology when the end in view is to assert that human nature underlies the divine; but the Sermon on the Mount does this with greater simplicity and clearness than any of the later councils where Greek had transformed Christian theology.

"The Use of a Liturgy in Worship" escapes all the common arguments about the enrichment of the service,

or the part the congregation ought to take, or the matter of taste, and rests entirely upon the need of a liturgy as a protest against individuality in religion and anarchy in government, as an act of sin and sacrifice. But praise and thanksgiving are as integral a part of worship as penitence, and bear as well or better any set form of expression; and the most radical doctrine, if it were accepted by any large number, could easily adapt a liturgy to its own views. The truth of the whole question lies even deeper than here expressed. In periods of great religious interest or questioning the expressions of holy souls have an earnestness and a spiritual vision from which after ages may find great help, but the ideal must ever be of that same zeal and intensity of religious feeling before which all forms and expressions are indifferent. That deep religious experience out of which come the beautiful and helpful spiritual words which are gathered into the formal liturgy must ever be our desire and aim.

The association of younger ministers has done well thus to emphasize the positive and spiritual side of the Free Church, and will more than justify its formation if each year it can give to the public a volume which shall preserve and enrich all the traditions of Unitarianism.

JAMES DE NORMANDIE.

45 LAMBERT AVENUE, BOSTON, MASS.,

January 1, 1893.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION.

BY REV. GEORGE CROSWELL CRESSEY.

BEFORE that world-monument, the Cologne cathedral, the hastening traveller pauses in amazement and marvel at the power of its inspiration,—*religion*,—and, if of thoughtful mind, awe-struck with the conviction that therein lies either the vastest of illusions or the deepest of realities. It is a sort of fashion, indeed, with some of our time complacently to assume the former alternative, to look upon religion as, at best, the highest fruit of the age of superstition. To such the power of will and choice is only a delusion, innate beliefs are only the somewhat purified products of the imagination of the infant race; penitence and remorse are simply regret with the additional feeling of responsibility and self-accusation arising from inability to discern the course of cause and effect within ourselves, which inexorably determines all action; and the feelings of obligation and duty seem the mere product of reflex egoism, a sort of sanctified utility. Many of these theories are subtle and in the abstract fairly coherent. They seem, however, special pleadings, not only ignoring the plain facts

of experience but virtually falling into the very error they habitually deride, namely, the assumption of "*a priori*" truth. They seem to take for granted an essentially materialistic view of the world, bending all energies then to the explanation of what are bound to obtrude themselves as unwelcome facts of precisely opposite import; and the final and fatal conclusion is, that, could their theories be practically accepted as truth,—which fortunately cannot be,—not only would moral progress be impossible, but the coherence and stability of society imperilled. In short, the welfare of man depends thus on a series of illusions, a view which renders the world an unmoral, if not an immoral system of things.

It is a question, indeed, whether the methods of investigating religion common to this school of thought have vindicated the right to the term "scientific," which they unhesitatingly and presumptuously appropriate. Science consists in the discovery of so-called material facts and their relations. In its true form it knows no antecedent presumptions, least of all theories into which every group of facts of whatever nature must somehow be forced. It recognizes that every effect must have a cause, but it never claims *to limit causes*. For this very reason the latest science is out of sympathy with materialism, since it discerns in matter, which may be popularly defined as that form of reality cognizable by the physical senses, no adequate cause for

the phenomena of mind, and hence in the brain, which, however highly organized, is still material, no adequate cause for the phenomena of personality.

In determining the nature of religion, then, we seek to ascertain the facts as apparent in the race as a whole. We ask first, what religion is as a universal phenomenon of mankind, not what is the content of any special religion, nor what is its ideal content, but, rather, just what are those characteristics common to every religion, to all forms in which the religious sense has ever manifested itself in man. Most definitions given seem erroneous or at least defective, to give some one characteristic rather than the entire content, not to be sufficiently inclusive, from Schleiermacher's "feeling of dependence" to Ingersoll's "making others happier, if it can be done easily," the latter of which may be characterized as humor at the expense of truth,—a travesty on the very idea of religion. What we desire is a statement which shall include the elements found in all religions even of most diverse character,—alike in the religion of the savage and in that of the seer, in the religions of the Semite to whom God is an immediate presence, and of the deist to whom he is only the absent whilom creator; alike in the religion of him whose God seems clothed with personal attributes, and in the religion of the agnostic to whom the Supreme is but the unknowable Absolute; alike in the great race religions and in the personal religions of

nature, ethics, and the æsthetic. We may express, I believe, what seem the common elements thus: *Religion is a recognition of the supersensuous in some form arousing the emotion and reacting on the life.* Without reference to truth or falsity, to implications or to doctrines, to foundation or to ideal, this seems a statement of what religion is, as in a multitude of forms it is present in personal experience.

We next inquire in regard to the basis of this universal religious sense. Whence comes this recognition of the Invisible, now in one form, now in another, and ever influencing in some measure the conduct? What, in brief, is the foundation of religion? The foundation of religion is the relation of the individual to the whole, or, in other words, *the relation of man to the universe.* The existence of such relation is self-evident. The truth is axiomatic. The reverse is inconceivable. It is clear that, whatever the relation be, man is related in some way to the world and universe of which he is a part. It is some kind of a system in which we live, and all parts of a system are inter-related. Absolute independence is incompatible with the idea of finite existence, and still more apparently in a practical way, with the possibility of society and of rational and of moral life. As the permanent relation of things is the basis of science, so the personal relation of every soul to the universe, or to Him whom the highest knowl-

edge sees to be the only adequate expression of its essence or reality, God, is the basis of religion. Without it the religious sense would be impossible. Upon it, whatever be the special interpretation of the universe, all species of religion rest.

Such being the foundation, the first element in religion, the intellectual, is *the recognition of such relation*. This is universal. Every rational being recognizes himself to be related in some manner to the system of things about him. The thought is not of course present at first in its abstract form. We do not construct a philosophy of life before we begin to act. The practical order is the reverse of the logical. The recognition was involved in the thought of the first intelligent being, who, beholding the marvels of earth and sea and sky, wondered what it all meant. It is involved more profoundly, but no more essentially, in man to-day, as, with the experience of centuries behind him and their knowledge before him, overleaping in thought the remotest star and sounding the depths of spiritual energy, he seeks to wrest from the laws of an inscrutable Presence the secrets of his own destiny.

The consciousness of this relation is the inspiration of the superstition of the savage, the reverence of the seer, the love of the saint. It is the first and fundamental element in religion of every type. Moreover, it is intuitional in its nature,—a cognition coming immediately through and invariably assumed in experience.

Attendant upon this is the second, the emotional element, the feeling of obligation to know and to fulfil this relation. Here is the active force of religion, the "feeling after God if haply we may find him," the feeling of duty toward some higher power even in case of those to whom such power is an impersonation of the vast or the arbitrary or only the formulated morality of the "social compact." Such feeling accompanies the recognition of our relation to that which is higher than ourselves universally and immediately,—a direct cognition of the heart, if I may so say, of its own general relation.

It is not contended that any innate faculty distinguishes at once between right and wrong in concrete example, simply that, the existence of a relation to the world and the universe being recognized, there is immediate feeling of obligation to fulfil this relation, and therefore to follow or not to follow certain lines of conduct, to perform or not to perform certain acts, giving rise thus to the practical distinction of right and wrong. The command of duty moreover does not, as in the Kantian ethics, create right and wrong. The duty or obligation urges to the fulfilment of an immediately perceived relation between ourselves and the system of which we are a part; but the precise content of this relation is determined more or less completely and accurately by the *reason*, whence arise naturally ideas of right conduct, different,

sometimes radically diverse, yet the inspiration of which is the same immediate feeling.

Efforts are made, as is well known, to derive the sense of duty from lower emotions and ultimately from perception of utility. It is claimed to be an incentive to the performance of that which should win the approbation of others, something which shall conform, in other words, to the highest social mandate, all of course on the basis of what experience seems to teach to be best for society. "Ought," therefore, is only a demand on the individual created by the sentiment of himself in the form of desire for approbation, and of others in the form of desire for well-being, to perform the useful. It is almost needless to remark in the first place that this is not the meaning of "ought" as realized in personal experience. Nor can we understand how any multiplication or intensity of the feeling of the mere desirability of an action or of its approval by others passes into the distinct and unique feeling of moral obligation. Given an individual destitute of any feeling of personal duty whatever, it is inconceivable how the desire for approbation could do aught else than control his action in conformity with his own pleasure, or how any long continued conduct of men from this motive could produce more than a mental habit or compulsion, at most a substantial "must." Further, it is impossible to understand how under this stimulus, ignorance of our action on the part of others

being certain, we should be led to the course in accordance with the highest welfare of the whole rather than our own personal satisfaction. And, finally, if we say we are influenced by what society *should* say of our action, we introduce the very element we design to explain. We are acting with reference to a moral ideal, *which we have transferred to society rather than society to us*. In truth, these alleged explanations of the origin and development of the simple sense of moral obligation invariably introduce more or less surreptitiously somewhere along the line of experience the very element at whose inception they claim finally to arrive. They are often ingenious and useful in showing the circumstances under which this sense appears and the method of its application and growth, but utterly fail to deduce duty from utility, to convert simple desire into inward behest, a laudable preference into a moral mandate.

Two fundamental elements of religion, the intellectual and the emotional, are thus recognition of our relation to the universe and the feeling of obligation to fulfil this relation,—elements which, if one desire, may be described as “*a priori*,” or intuitional in distinction from the interpretation of this relation and all doctrines of rules and conduct involved therein. The possibility and necessity of religion arise from man’s relation to the universe. This is its foundation. The two simple fundamental elements of religion itself are the recogni-

tion of this relation and the feeling of obligation to its fulfilment.

THE CONTENT OF RELIGIONS.

How, then, is determined the peculiar content of *a* religion, whence its doctrines and principles of conduct? How also shall be determined *the* religion, its creed and its ethics? We reply without hesitation, Through the reason. These are established *a posteriori*, only through experience tested and formulated by the rational faculty. That the reasoning element is slight and its results largely false in case of the religious ideas of many unenlightened people is of course true; yet whatever definite notions they hold of their relation to the universe, whether that of subjection to one or many arbitrary powers, or in whatever form their ideas shape themselves, they are the result of personal experience and of inferences therefrom. They may have misconceived and misunderstood the relation in which they stand to the higher Power as well as the nature of the Power himself. Their views, nevertheless, are the result of an effort to realize and to fulfil that which they feel to exist. In the religions of India, for example, we find both most intense recognition of this relation to the universe and effort, by abundant and most subtle reasoning from outer and especially inner experience, to comprehend and express its content and to act in conformance thereto. In the same way the ultimate

religious ideal, *the* religion, it is evident, must be discovered through a complete experience and correct reasoning from such experience to the truth itself. The content of ideal religion—in other words, the full comprehension of man's relation to the universe—will be identical with "the truths, laws, ideals, and ends of Reason."

This involves no disregard of the feelings, aspirations, instinctive beliefs, universal convictions, of mankind. All these have their proper place and value. This value, however, must be determined by the reasoning power. The instinct of immortality, for example, the substantially universal belief in a future life, the recognition of personal identity in self-consciousness, the feeling of moral responsibility,—all these are realities of great significance. They are yet duly estimated and made the ground of valid inference and belief only by the reason. Man doubtless apprehends much, even the highest truth, without conscious reasoning; but often at the root of this apprehension, which now comes as it were intuitively, was some process of ratiocination, and certainly these direct convictions have objective authority only as they are seen to be reasonable both in their nature and content. Raised to a lofty sphere of thought and life, the distinct mental processes may disappear from view. The soul may surmount the mists of uncertainty into a cloudless sky with an ever-widening horizon. There may come thus to the

soul the highest truth almost as instinct; and, so far from being irrational, such knowledge is the highest product of the reason and the foundation of spirituality. Yet, that the truth may apprehend the whole man, man must first apprehend the truth.

With no disrespect, then, to native feelings, without depreciation of the religious instincts, and in full cognizance of that higher experience which, having worked its way in heart and thought and life to the plane of lofty vision, discerns as by direct inspiration eternal truth, we affirm that the precise content of religion, the interpretation of man's relation to the universe and its indwelling Power, the special doctrines and beliefs held by men and by races, come through the reason.

There are many, however, whose beliefs and faith are determined by the teachings of a supposed supernatural revelation, which discloses the nature of Deity and of man, announces the purposes of the divine government and prescribes certain doctrines and duties for human assent and performance. Still the acceptance of such revelation does not, as a matter of fact, impeach the sovereignty of the reason. First, its validity can only be established through the rational faculty. No assumed revelation ever was or ever could be accepted without thought and the conclusion, whether correct or the reverse, based upon certain facts, that its claims are valid; while, with every generation and at the hand of every seeker after truth, these claims will

be subjected to a re-test in the light of increasing knowledge. And, again, anything in the revelation itself which runs athwart the established principles of reason, contradicts its practical precepts, if such at any time be found, either gives rise in the minds of men to the conviction of the misunderstanding or false interpretation of this special part, or produces incertitude in regard to the genuineness of the revelation, the truths of its claims for itself or of men for it. In either case Reason vindicates its right as the last tribunal of appeal.

It may be considered high time, however, to define "reason." Better known, indeed, is it through works than through definition. It is reason which has gathered the earth into our everyday geography and geology and the universe into our astronomy, which has chained the lightning to the chariot of man and made the caverns of the ocean the highway of his voice, which has weighed the suns and sounded the depths of spiritual energy, and, reading the history of the stars, yet returns unto itself as the greatest mystery and marvel of all. To gather such powers and more into the compass of definition seems impracticable, yet we may hope to cover its essence thus: Reason is that faculty which abstracts, generalizes, comprehends, judges, or, in other words, that faculty through which man cognizes his own being, and perceives and *interprets* relations.

From the interpretation thus of his relation to

others, and especially to the one great Reality of the universe, arise religious ideas, doctrines and creeds. It is possible, as has been already said in substance, consistently to allow the authority of some special revelation in matters which transcend observation and experience, provided the rational faculty justify such revelation by satisfactory establishment of its validity. Yet this faculty as the inevitable and perpetual test of such revelation in its claims, its interpretation, and its teachings, must still be regarded as the faculty through which the content of religious belief is determined. Reason, it may be said, is the one general and fundamental revelation of the universe to its children, of God to man.

INTERPRETATION OF THE UNIVERSE.

In the great race and catholic religions of the world we find in general five principal doctrines,—the doctrines of God, of man, of human destiny, of moral responsibility and sin, and of salvation. Of these the first three are fundamental, the last two being involved in and determined by the ideas of God and of man. And, as the foundation of religion is man's relation to the universe, so also the interpretation of the universe and of man's relation thereto have given rise to these three fundamental tenets of all formulated religion,—the universe interpreting itself to the mind and heart as Almighty Power in some form, God; and man's rela-

tion thereto, in some special ideas regarding his nature and duties, his continued existence and destiny.

We discern with awe, in truth, the message which Nature has ever whispered to the soul; and, though man have in part misunderstood its import, though it have been distorted by vagaries of superstition and whims of fancy, yet it must be acknowledged the human race has held unswervingly to its central thought, God. In the earliest development of religion man saw in the forces of nature separate divinities. Our poetic expression was to them serious fact. The living river flowed on its errand, the wind told its mournful story, the sea was jealous of its rights and even the stars conjured for man's weal or woe. He could explain action only by the springs of action within himself; and no knowledge of second causes, no investigation of the laws of nature, can prove the falsity or even dim the truth of the essence of the interpretation. He saw but the surface of things, he saw them only as they affected himself, not in their relations. Yet he discerned the only direct cause of which man to-day knows or can rationally conceive, the volition of an intelligence.

Just how far there was in the human mind in the infancy and youth of the race a sense of one vast Power of whom the numerous divinities of nature were manifestations, we can only conjecture. Certain it is, however, that in gradual development

came the idea of one more powerful, finally one supreme deity, eventuating in a rude monotheism. Still, the great reality of the universe was in general an individual God, with the enlarged attributes of man, a conception becoming more and more rational through the successive periods of Hebrew history,—the nation of antiquity, which lived nearest in thought to the ever-living Presence,—until in the days of its later prophets the transcendence and power of the spiritual became more and more real; and in the deep and pure insight of Jesus was reached the highest conception, Love.

The universe has interpreted itself to humanity as the work of Almighty Power. Under the pressure of its force and the solemnity of its mystery, men have reasoned from the facts at their command to the sublime conclusion. They have found within themselves a certain amount of power. They have exercised this. They have perceived results. But they have experienced phenomena outside themselves. They have inferred that such occurrences are the result of power or action also; and, as the essence and source of their own power seemed not of the body but of something more real and persistent within, to external things they have attributed the same inner being. And, as things in advancing perception are seen to be more and more connected and related, the powers become less and less in number and the power itself more

real and extensive in thought, till at last it seems one and indwelling, and all things

“ One stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul.”

The logic of the general course of their thought and the truth of the general conclusion no man can gainsay. As the tendency to nature-worship among the ancient Greeks, the perception of deity or deities in and through nature, produced among the Greek fathers the idea of the indwelling or immanence of God, so we also, as science has led us to a greater knowledge and appreciation of the material world as the handiwork and representation, and in one sense the visible being of the Almighty, have outgrown purely anthropomorphic conceptions, no longer think of him as apart from the universe, but as its immanent and energizing power. As the human mind, moreover, in its conception of time, naturally thinks of endless time, eternity, as its correlate; as, too, in its conception of space, it is led to the thought of limitless space, — so also our conception of power arouses in us the idea of unlimited power, of infinite energy, as its correlate. As we discern further the mutual relation, the interdependence of all things, as from the lessons of science we learn that every particle is affected by every other particle, — we arrive irresistibly at the conclusion that things can exist in this relative state only as they are all related to or

are forms of an Infinite; or to reach the thought in another way that, if everything were independent or complete in itself, it is impossible to conceive how things could mutually act and react upon each other, that this can be explained only as all things are alike related to an infinite essence or substratum whose self-maintenance in reciprocal compensations produces the phenomena which we call "change," or, more popularly speaking, that all things are forms of one Energy, whose variations appear to us in multiform forces, acting in manifold ways as numberless apparently individual things. The idea of an Infinite Power, the energy of the world, in truth, no one assumes to deny. Whatever conflict there may be in science or philosophy or theology is not regarding the existence, but the nature of the Infinite, whether matter or spirit, material or spiritual, blind force or intelligence.

A series of phenomena affect our physical senses through which we see, hear, feel, in various forms, something outside ourselves, the characteristic of which we find to be extension; and to this something in multitudinous variations we give the name "matter." Another series of phenomena we perceive immediately, not through the physical senses, but in our own consciousness and inward experience and the inner experience of others, as through the medium of language it is conveyed to our minds, the characteristic of which is thought; and the

subject of these inner experiences we call "spirit." They are both realities which we are compelled to postulate as the causes of two entirely diverse series of phenomena. We have no knowledge whatever of the essential nature of what we call "matter." All theories are tentative. We only know there must be some ground of the varied experience of our senses, probably some unit dynamic or of infinitesimal extension, which in infinitely complex combinations produces such diversified phenomena.

On the other hand, we know there must be some cause of our inner experience, thought, emotion, volition, which arises through no intervention of the outer senses, some subject of all phenomena of this class; and we therefore postulate "spirit." Belief in the spiritual rests upon precisely the same foundation as belief in the material; namely, the necessity for the assumption of adequate cause for universally attested experience. While material, moreover, may be traced in change into highly complex forms and into various so-called physical forces, its transmutation into energy of the spiritual type, into even the simplest of mental phenomena, is inconceivable. In the words of Professor Tyndall, certainly unprejudiced testimony, "The passage is *unthinkable*"; *i.e.*, in the language of logic and common sense, it is impossible and the idea *absurd*. We can no more rationally think of the physical series, the nerve forces of the

brain, becoming thought, than we can measure reflection and fancy by a yardstick or weigh ethical principles on standard scales. The thing series and the thought series are incommensurable and utterly diverse in nature. Hence not only the notion that mind may be the product of matter, but also the theory that an unconscious blind infinite has developed into points of intelligence and self-consciousness, is unprofitable and absurd. As self-consciousness and reason or intelligence, are the highest realities, indeed the only veritable realities of the finite world, nothing less may be predicated as the essence of the Infinite from whom all proceeds.

The conclusion of formal logic, however, is reached at once by the natural play of the forces of man's head and heart. As a satisfactory conception of the Higher Power, man demands instinctively nothing less than self-consciousness or personality. The laborious theories which result in the establishment through blind force of a universe which, without creative reason, has developed and conducts itself *as if it were* directed by reason, by an indwelling intelligence, is not for a moment tolerated by the natural philosophy of man. "The heart crieth out for the living God"; and universal belief and advanced science unite with sacred writ in that sublime affirmation, "God is spirit."

The interpretation of the universe to the mind has been ever in the same direction of thought.

The reflections of the savage and of the seer have contained alike the one essential truth. They have differed only in the depth, extension, form and expression of the central thought, which have been naturally determined by the amount of understanding and appreciation of the various manifestations of Deity and their relations; and around this interpretation of the universe to man, this God-idea, have crystallized the theologies of the world.

INTERPRETATION OF MAN'S RELATION TO THE UNIVERSE.

As the universe has interpreted itself to man, whence the doctrine of God, so man has interpreted his relation to the universe or to its expression, Deity; and on this interpretation rest likewise the doctrines of his nature and destiny. Man feels himself to be an individual entity, and, more than this also, a persistent identity. He arrives naturally at the same conclusion which investigation and logic justify in regard to the nature of matter and spirit, and the impossibility of referring the latter to any material cause,—a brief summary of which has been already given. He believes that man *is* a soul,—a belief which all the special pleading of materialists has never shaken and can in no wise invalidate. His kinship with the Divine and the Infinite dawns upon him with the first whispers of the Supreme Reason; and, perceiving himself to be somehow related to the great system of which he is a part, and feeling obligation to fulfil this

relation, he forms some conception not only of what he is, but of what he should and will be, *i.e.*, of his duty and of his destiny.

As the first conception of Deity is power, so the first conception of duty is obedience,—obedience to arbitrary or capricious will; and the predominating attendant emotion is naturally fear. At the same time, as experience discloses a limit of action and efforts fail to realize purpose, arise the ideas of shortcoming and of propitiation which shall remove the consequence of omission and of misdeed, all of which notions involve truth and are rude prototypes of the deepest realities of enlightened spiritual life. We need not mock in truth, like some boastful but shallow iconoclasts of the present day, at the superstitious fears and crude religion of primæval man. The marvel is that, appalled at the magnitude of that which his eye beheld, he yet dared to raise his voice, in defiance of the powers which threatened his very existence, in assertion of his own place and value and destiny. In the superstitious rites and grotesque religious ideas of savage races there is the intrinsic dignity of a daring faith, which marks them as no mere children of unconscious motion, as no mere animals into whom some fatuous current of evolution has wrought strange illusions. Trembling thou standest, ancient child of desert or of forest, before the seemingly wayward forces of nature and the unknown and unseen Presence; yet one day shalt thy

race comprehend the powers which now terrify thee, shalt fathom their secrets and master them to its own service, and in full assurance of its divinity, face to face in soul within and nature without with the Almighty himself, shalt lose the terrors of Infinite Power in the grandeur of Infinite Reason and the glory of Infinite Love.

Theory may be added to theory attempting to explain by the experience of dreams or perception of the reflected image in the water or other occurrences the origin of the instinctive sense of immortality. The secret of the belief is in the intrinsic nature of man. Incidents like these at most hastened its development. Animals see themselves in the liquid mirror, animals dream; yet in them has arisen no idea of a future life, nor of any life, in truth, as such. Specific notions in regard to the nature of a future existence, often strange, grotesque and mystical, have of course varied in degree of rationality. In the Mohammedan and Indian as in most religions these ideas have been determined largely by the respective notions of the objects of human existence and happiness; but ever has the human heart held fast to the inborn conviction of its intimate relation to God, of its direct kinship not with the material but with the spiritual and the eternal.

It would be interesting, did space permit, to trace the development of the primitive elements in transition into their rational counterparts of en-

lightened faith, to follow the idea of obedience to arbitrary will as it passes little by little in religious history into conformance to the requirements of indwelling reason and righteousness, to discern the gradual transition of fear into reverence and love, to investigate the progress of the ethical sentiment as still drawing inspiration from the obligation of man to God, it has found more and more a reasonable application in the relations of a common humanity. In all forms and variations, however, these constitute the development and content of the conception of man's relation to Deity; and in the religion of Jesus Christ we reach the ideal relation, that relation of the soul to God and through God of soul to soul which we summarize as the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL.

Religion is said by many to pertain, at least in its highest form, to the supernatural. Natural religion is allowed, but only as a sort of indefinite foundation and confirmation of the more specific and vital supernaturalism. Though much depends in any such statement on the use of terms, the position may well be doubted. "Supernatural," as generally understood, applies to events which must be ascribed to some supermundane agency, taking place outside or independently of the uniform course of cause and effect. By natural phenomena, on the other hand, we understand such

as occur in uniform manner as the result of known or generally accepted forces. This distinction, never very clear or practical, has become inapplicable. The principle of natural law, in the sense that all finite events must proceed in regular sequence from adequate cause, must be extended through all phenomena of every kind. There is "natural law in the spiritual world." Whether we adopt some idealistic philosophy or remain content with that virtual dualism the characteristic of all other systems, in which the thing series and the thought series, like two parallels, can be assumed to meet only at infinity, we have no reason to doubt the uniformity of result everywhere under similar conditions. The whisper of conscience, the spiritual inspirations which we call, and indeed are, the message of God to the soul, must be regarded as coming to us through regularly ordained channels of spiritual influence. It is indeed the grandeur and power of spiritual forces that from their very nature they ever come as with special significance. We may characterize, if we will, all phenomena of the spirit, all inner cognition and experience, even those of purely logical nature, as supernatural, likewise also the train of events set in motion when a volition of the spirit by a method of correspondence entirely beyond our knowledge produces the action of the body upon some external object; but we shall have only a distinction amply expressed by other terms. The

words "natural" and "supernatural" seem to have meaning for us only as the one refers to the method, the other to the source of activity,—a sense which, through our realization of the presence of the Absolute in all the works of his hand, seems applicable to all spheres. They seem, in short, to express only the two aspects of creation, the one as we view the flowing stream, the other as we reflect upon the Infinite Source.

In accordance with this view,—which, while rational and consistent with experience, involves in no wise a sacrifice of personal religion and its immediate inspiration,—we must regard Christianity, the highest form of religion, as at once natural and supernatural, like all its lower and defective forms; nor can we admit the arbitrary distinction of natural and "revealed." Truth is its own authority; and the value of revelation is not in its method but in its content. Nor indeed does the thought of universal revelation through uniformity of spiritual law fail to satisfy, appealing, as it must, in its far-reaching grandeur, to the reason and reverence of man.

In the northern portion of the United States rises the Mississippi; and directly southward along the centre of the continent, uniting with the Missouri, a stream of longer but more devious course, augmented also by other tributaries, it flows with ever-broadening, ever more fertilizing waters into the sea. Thus the stream of Christianity, originat-

ing from plain historic sources, has come down through the centre of human history. It is joining unto itself to-day that older and longer current of so-called natural religion whose fountains lie far back on the confines of human experience, in the morning twilight of humanity. It will receive, is even now receiving into itself, the tributaries of science, of art, of the æsthetic, of all human knowledge; and thus, an ever-increasing flood of truth and righteousness, ever more potent for the elevation and salvation of man, it will flow on through coming time to the ocean of eternity.

KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH.

A discussion of the philosophy of religion would seem defective, were no word written of the nature and relation of knowledge and faith,—knowledge, the guide of action; faith, its inspiration. No terms have been more abused and misunderstood: by some the second as more, the first as less, than reality; by others the first as more, the second as less. Certain types of religion exalt faith and depreciate knowledge, forgetting that, as the test of faith is works, so the foundation is what we know. Certain types of thought have ridiculed faith and deified knowledge, overlooking the fact that strict demonstration is nowhere found outside of mathematics, nor even there since all its proofs start with an assumption, and that the majority of scientific doctrines so called rest substantially on faith.

In the past we have had men who knew everything, even the plans of God. To-day we have those who supply in the contradiction what they lack in the extension of their claims. They assume at the same time virtually to know nothing and everything. They declare the impossibility of all knowledge of the nature of things; yet they assume to have struck the key-note, the certainty of ignorance. As the word "agnostic" has been constructed with little reference to the etymology of the Greek, so its significance may be said to include a composite which fails to consist with the laws of thought. Agnosticism is denial, or it is nothing. If it is denial, it is not *agnosticism*.

As in all problems which theologians have snarled and at which scientists have sneered, both elements are valid. The being who through telescope and microscope has magnified his vision till it sweeps infinitude and grasps the infinitesimal, surely need not shrink from certainty of the cognitions of his own experience. Curious anomaly is that which eagerly accepts the half-proved hypotheses of science, but disdains to receive as truth the universal dictates of the inner life, and still greater that which, while denying or doubting their reality, ever thinks, reasons, acts, in absolute accordance with them. Unless, in truth, the universe be a vehicle of deception and man a machine which maladroitly develops just those natural and practical convictions which are contrary to actual truth,

feelings of moral responsibility, of the power of will, of spiritual affinity, and of personal identity,—a theory philosophically the rankest absurdity, religiously the blackest pessimism,—we must credit the soul with at least an essentially correct account of its own nature and faculties. Direct knowledge of ourselves and through universal experience of the precepts of reason and righteousness, as well as through evidence of the senses of the so-called material world, is the only alternative of an absolute scepticism which doubting even itself falls into the pit of hopeless absurdity. And faith is its complement. Faith is that feeling in man which on the one hand instinctively trusts the foundations of knowledge and on the other the inferences which humanity draws in regard to the future from a knowledge of the past and the present. We hear sometimes of rational faith, but there is no faith which is not rational. All other is merely sanctified fancy. We have faith in the future of the race on this planet, because we see those forces at work which seem likely in the course of events to work together for good. We have faith in the immortal destiny of man, because it seems a reasonable conclusion from all the facts of life, physical, mental, moral and spiritual. We have faith in the future of man, both seen and unseen, because alone on this basis can be discerned any rational purpose in the vast energies of creation, in the colossal travail

of the ages. We believe in immortality, as an eminent modern philosopher and evolutionist has said, "as a supreme act of faith in the *reasonable-ness* of God's work."

Faith is thus at once the characteristic and the strength of finite intelligence. It is the divine and divining faculty of the soul which casts the horoscope of the ages. Through reason we read the scroll of Infinite Law. In faith we interpret the refrain of Eternal Love.

THE REVELATION OF GOD IN NATURE.

THE REVELATION OF GOD IN NATURE.

BY REV. L. D. COCHRANE.

IN treating this great subject of the revelation of God in nature, I shall attempt for the most part to set forth only the spiritual facts mirrored in my mind during four years' sojourn in the White Mountains. I would picture to the reader in words some of the spiritual realities I have caught glimpses of while climbing those hills or mountains clothed with the green of summer, the red and gold of autumn, or while looking upon those frozen streams sparkling under the full moon in winter.

A revelation, it seems to me, is only a shining into man's mind from that great unseen world all about him of the light of a new spiritual reality. The revealing is an unveiling not of the mighty spiritual reality, but of man's own soul; and the Unseen comes into man's heart-temple.

THE MYSTERIOUS IN NATURE.

Whether men first identified God with some hero who had passed on from his adventurous scenes into the unknown, or looked upon some of the mysterious powers of nature surrounding them as their God, it is certain a large number of earth's first

children saw their God in the wonderful phenomena of the natural world. So in our childhood it is not back of the mysterious words of some book that we see God, but it is in the awful mystery of the thunder or in the source of the rain and the snow that the child mind pictures its God. Mystery is the chief element of the child's religion, and mystery is an essential element of all religions. Mr. Herbert Spencer thinks religion has for its sole province the realm of the unknown. This may be an exaggeration, yet religion stretches far out into the unknown. Nature furnishes a boundless field for the religious mind to revel in the mysterious. The least particle of nature furnishes a boundless field. All forms of human nature may find enough in that field, from the child held spell-bound by the wonder of the comet to the trained man of science looking through the microscope at the wonderful life streams in the hair of the nettle, then in imagination seeing all fresh young life filled with such life streams, with their whirling eddies and maelstroms. Who has not, as he looked upon the innumerable creations going on about him in the springtime, felt his soul stirred with an awe approaching reverence for the Power back, for the Creator? As for myself, with the old poet,—

“ My heart is awed within me when I think
Of the great miracle that still goes on
In silence around me, the perpetual work
Of thy creation, finished, yet renewed forever.”

Surely there is enough of mystery anywhere in nature to feed the cravings of the strongest religious mind, and these mysteries of nature are wholesome. They are unlike the mysterious theologies of books. The mysteries contained in books are too often only contradictions, causes for endless religious wars; but here in nature each soul may choose and live in peace in its own wonder-world.

Many souls nourish their religious natures, feel the great Unseen Spirit hovering over them like a dove when they sit in their temple or cathedral, with the mysterious symbols and imagery about them; while there is another large class of souls who, preserving a part of childhood's wonder and awe at Nature's wonderful powers, regenerate their spirits, feel their hearts throbbing with the life-streams from the Infinite Heart when they sit in Nature's temples, with her symbols and imagery ever pointing to greater and deeper mysteries. And every mystery is a shining into their souls of the light of the All-Spirit,—not enough that they may see the Great Spirit, but only in sufficient quantity to make their hearts feel that it is there, and, longing for it, ever seek and find!

GOD'S ETERNITY IN NATURE.

To many souls God proclaims his own eternity through nature with more force than ever uttered by Hebrew prophet or psalmist. The old oak, whose strong arms shield us from the sun's burning

rays, has stood and held its place against storm and flood for five centuries. The river at our feet is five hundred thousand years old. The rock upon which we sit had its birth æons embracing untold millions of years ago; while the laws of the tree life, of the formation of river and rocks, have their endless being in eternity. Thus plainly does the spirit of nature proclaim through its wonderful bodily organs and their functions, I am the same to-day, yesterday, and forever. "I am the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity."

GOD'S POWER IN NATURE.

In all the thoughts of a Supreme Being from the child to the man, from the lowest savage to the highest civilized man, the element of Power is never absent. One of the first names the ancient Hebrews gave their God was El, the Powerful One. In our prayers God is the Powerful One who may help us, beneath the shadow of whose wing we may find rest.

All nature is revealing to us his power, from the tiny plant that withstands the winter blasts and the whirlwind to the inconceivable force of a Niagara. When in imagination we try to grasp the Power that heaved up the mountains and made fast the mighty walls of the seas, then pass not from our earth, and looking back see it with its trees, its mountains, and its waters whirling through space, then in thought try to apprehend

the innumerable hosts of the starry heavens, all rolling on in their allotted courses, we are overwhelmed with the thought of the All-Powerful.

GOD'S WISDOM IN NATURE.

I believe, too, the wisdom of the Great Unseen is revealed through nature to many minds more clearly than is possible from any other source. Now I will halt a little; for it is here, in the contemplation of nature, that two classes of minds part company. The first sees the evidences of wisdom in the ordered course of the universe. The second sees in nature only force and its blind laws. The latter of these two classes may have gone along with me thus far in spirit, if not always in letter, substituting the word "nature" for my word "God," — gone along with me feeling the mystery of the great Unknown in nature, and saying "Amen" to the evidences of the Eternal I see in nature, recognizing that the power about us is infinite, but unable to say that that power is all-wise. To their minds Nature is soulless. To my mind nature is soulful.

Some of the old arguments for design in nature have been overthrown; but, though all the old reasons should be shown to be faulty, yet the truly religious heart will always feel as sure that there is a soul in nature as that there is a soul in man. I think it is this consciousness that leads Herbert Spencer at last toward the close of his mammoth

labors, after surveying the crude and superstitious beginnings of the religions of the world, to conclude that back of all uncertainties and doubts will ever remain the one certainty, that there is a higher Consciousness, the All-Powerful, from which all things proceed.

This conviction of a soul in nature I conceive it is which leads John Fiske and a constantly increasing number of other American thinkers to declare that this is not a universe of dead matter, but of life, everywhere life. Professor Tyndall shook the whole religious world a few years ago with fear by saying that matter contains the promise and potency of life. What is the meaning of this statement but a radical way of saying that God is not outside, but inside nature? In the new light shining about us it is not a denial of God. There is a great appeal made to science in these days to overthrow the claims of the religious heart, but scientific men have said some of the strongest things for religion. The great scientist, Euler, looking upon the wonderful power of gravity, by which two or more worlds, separated vast distances from one another, yet travel bound together, as children walking hand in hand, declared, "The essence of gravitation is desire"; and the English scientist, Wallace, concludes that it is not improbable that all force is will power. We might bring forward other words of the masters of science, declaring that there is a soul in nature; but those we have

brought forward seem enough. Their thought that Nature is animated by one breathing life, that all power, from the lifting of the sap into the budding blossom to the lifting of worlds nearer their centres, is will power and affection, is an assurance to man struggling with his doubts and his fears that his heart is right when it looks up and cries, Abba, Father!

The hard thinkers of this age are not materialists. They have peered through nature's outer self to the all-animating spirit within, whose sweet presence, dovelike, broods over us. These men have chased the forces of nature from one hiding-place to another till they have concluded that all forces are really but one force: now mental power, then nervous energy; here muscular force, there making the ponderable molecules of dead matter vibrate; yonder electricity, light, heat, chemical affinity, the strength of plant life, again muscular force, nervous energy, and mental power. Earnestly, they have asked themselves, Which is *the* one force? Is it the physical force outside or the spiritual energy inside? And they have wisely concluded that, of all the different forms of force, we know best the one *within* us. That we know at first hand, all the others at second hand. Therefore, to call it physical is to translate the known into the unknown. Such a conclusion would not be a passing from darkness into light, but a plunge from light into darkness. The one infinite energy

is the same as its near end in us. It is spiritual power. Slowly, the wisest of this nineteenth century have ascended step by step the ladder of nature into the grand old thought of Paul,— “There is one God above all and through all and in all.” Nature is not soulless. Nature *minus God* is not nature any more than man *minus mind* is man. And I know of no place where the wisdom of this Infinite Mind is so manifest as in nature. In the wonderful structures of the animal and vegetable life of the earth, in the matchless order of the starry worlds, how each and all move in their eternal rounds! As you have looked upon their spangled hosts, thought of their onward march, have you not with the poet heard them sing,—

“The hand that made us is divine”?

THE DIVINE BEAUTY IN NATURE.

The Power that makes for grace and beauty gives us in the varying pictures of summer and winter an abundant revelation of his beauty. What soul can tell to another in words the beauty of a drop of water glistening in the moonlight, of one of the thousand sunsets seen in a lifetime, or of the beauty of a large green tree, of the green wooded hills across the valley, so many bouquets of nature, variegated by the moving shadows of snow-breasted clouds, floating symbols of purity, the blue sky over all! If these few objects of nature be samples

of the beauty of his garments, how beautiful God must be! With the old Hebrew poet we sing: "Behold the beauty of the Lord." "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Bow before him, all the earth."

The other less inviting aspects of nature, where we see little or no grace or beauty, have for the initiated charms inexpressible. Even the irregular features of a truly good man, as we know him more and more, take on a peculiar beauty. So Emerson, the real neighbor and lover of the Over-Soul, said he had seen in a mud puddle inexpressible beauty. Again with the poet of Israel we sing, "Let the beauty of the Lord be upon us."

THE DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS IN NATURE.

God proclaims his righteousness most clearly in the holy of holies in our moral nature. Yet, for those who have ears to hear, his words, "Be ye righteous even as I am righteous," are heard clearly in the sacred temples of nature. The murderer's conscience accuses him scarcely more than the innocent leaves about him in his hiding-place in the forest. The pure and noble face of Nature to the initiated is like a picture on the wall of a pure and perfect man, a silent speaker, saying: "Go ye into the straight way. Be ye clean." As I have walked on a dark, cloudy day into the hushed stillness of the woods, I have felt myself, I believe, as near the holy of holies of the Righteous One

as ever Hebrew psalmist felt when entering the Jewish temple.

THE DIVINE HEART IN NATURE.

Lastly, I want to tell you some of the ways God is telling us through nature of his goodness. Sometimes we feel very near to nature. With Bobby Burns we see ourselves the earth-born companion of the mouse. We feel comradeship with the birds and the flowers. We enter into fellowship with sturdy oaks. We lie on Mother Earth's breast, and feel indeed that she is our mother. Nor is the heart wrong in this knowledge, if, as the men of science say, gravitation is desire and all force is but will force. Our love of nature comes from the human aspect we see in it. The thought of a tree which stirs our hearts is not that it is COVERED with green leaves and white blossoms, but that it is ROBED in green and white; and so our tenderest thoughts of the earth covered with green plants is not that this vegetable life will feed us, but that it is the GARMENT of the old earth. And our love of the old earth itself arises not on account of its being the earth, but because it is MOTHER Earth. We say the waters laugh and murmur, that the winds moan and sigh. These, to my mind, are not mere figures of speech, but the plainest statement of the eternal truth, that, as the human in us looks out through our natural bodies, so the Infinite Human looks out through all nature, and, as the

tenderest of mothers, cares for all her children. Eckermann tells us that he once told the German poet, Goethe, after seeing a bird freed from its imprisonment return through the open window to feed its young, that such paternal love, superior to danger and imprisonment, moved him deeply and surprised him greatly. "Foolish man," replied the old poet, with a meaning smile, "if you believed in God, you would not wonder. Did not God inspire the bird with this all-powerful love for its young. And, did not similar impulses pervade all animate nature, the world could not subsist. But thus is the divine energy everywhere diffused and divine love everywhere active."

However much our souls may be stirred by the words of our sacred books, sometimes our hearts are moved to say, Right here before us is the Eternal Speaker. This morning, rising with the birds and climbing some hill, you could have seen the drama of creation enacted. The God of the morning again said, "Let there be light"; and light was, gilding the mountain peaks and hill-tops and descending in floods of glory to the valleys, and in the lakes and rivers shone the face of the Giver of light. Thrice happy he who stands here. From the first streakings of the morning light the brightness has grown more and more, till the glad earth sends up songs of praise from innumerable choirs of birds and her incense from opening flowers and spreading leaves. The clouds of the night sud-

denly take on a warm glow of love, and he feels that the God of the morning is also God of his own soul. What are the promises of any book now? They tell of faith. He *has* faith. They tell what the inspired souls of old saw. He *sees*. They tell what the prophets heard. He *hears*. They tell of promises of life eternal to the faithful. He left all the animal of his being in the valley below. All his sensations are dissolved in soul; and he feels himself a spirit akin to the Eternal Spirit, and is sure that death can have no power over him. What assurance more needs he? The immortal is all about him. In it he lives and has his being.

There is a Great Good at the heart of things that never rests, never hastens, but is always coming forth as life and love.

Now warming in the sun,
Now fanning in the breeze,
Now shining in the waters,
Now budding in the trees,
Revealing to us always Beauty's very soul,
In the song of the bird and the love that is there,
In the green-mantled mountain, stately and fair,
In earth and sky, everywhere in the boundless whole,
Speaking to us through history's widening page,
Beckoning us on through hope to the fuller age,
Speaking to us in the blooming rose, the green blade,
In the kiss of the mother, the smile of the babe.

THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE AND AS
REVELATION.

THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE AND AS REVELATION.

BY REV. W. W. FENN.

“When I heard the learned astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns
before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add,
divide, and measure them,
When I, sitting, heard the astronomer where he lectured
with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till, rising and gliding out, I wandered off by myself,
In the mystical moist night air, and from time to time
Looked up in perfect silence at the stars.”

WHILE the learned critics are arguing upon the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, the composition of its various books, their date and authorship, a weariness like that which Whitman describes is already coming over those who love the Bible for itself alone, caring little for its pedigree or credentials, and who incline sometimes to be quit of all the fuss and pother by gliding out from the strife of tongues and looking up in perfect silence at the stars which shine in the spiritual

firmament of Israel. Let their distances from us and their relations to one another be what they may, let Isaiah be a single or a double star and the Pentateuch a cluster of stars or a single radiant orb, as the astronomers may determine, what matters it all to one who nightly draws fresh peace and power from their shining eyes? Shall not a man worn and heartsick after the noise and fury of the day take simply and gratefully the rest and refreshment of his own home instead of racking his already over-wrought brain over difficult and, so far as he personally is concerned, entirely unimportant questions concerning the origin and authority of the family? For us at least who have learned to respect the natural sanctities of growth, who value a pure and noble man no less highly because of his youthful flecks and imperfections, in whose memory the harsh notes of a jarring lyre struck at first do not linger to make less sweet the consummate music beaten out at last by a master's hand, the real value of the Bible is quite unaffected by the questions that are now discussed so hotly; and therefore, harassed as we are by urgent problems of life and death import, we would fain keep out of this conflict altogether, nor cloud our skies with battle dust.

"Let the long contention cease.
Geese are swans, and swans are geese.
Let them have it how they will.
Thou art tired, best be still."

BIBLE CRITICISM AND OUR INTEREST IN IT.

But, as soon as the moment of weakness is past, the inclination is distinctly seen to be backward, and not forward,—a temptation from below, not a beckoning from above, the reversionary prompting of a selfishness which growing sympathy is making rudimentary. Lucretius and Matthew Arnold represent two stages in the rise of that stream of human sympathy of which alone the prophet's words hold good: "Everything shall live whither the river cometh." In the second book of "*De rerum Natura*," after describing the pleasure one finds in watching from the shore an anxious rowman making perilous way through the yeasty waves or in viewing from an eminence a fierce fight wagging on the plain below, Lucretius adds, "But nothing is sweeter than to occupy impregnable temples built by the calm teaching of sages, whence one can look down and see others wandering hither and yon, and straggling in search of the way of life." In significant contrast with Lucretius, whose joy in his own security is increased rather than diminished by the peril of others, Matthew Arnold writes of those nowadays whose eyes are opened to see from the height of truth the "feeble wavering line" straying aimlessly in the wild:—

"Languor is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow.

*Ye alight in our van ! At your voice
Panic, despair, flee away.
Ye move through the ranks, recall
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
Praise, reinspire, the brave."*

Measured thus, as the man with the measuring line sounded the stream in Ezekiel's vision at intervals of thousands, it becomes clear that the flood of sympathy with others, which was only ankle-deep in the age of Lucretius, is breast-high now; and it has brought with it a deepening sense of responsibility. We cannot live in the age of Lucretius without fault. To pray that we may dwell in the house of the Lord forever, while the Lord's battles are waging without, has become the wish of a coward or a shirk, and not a prompting of the spirit. Since these debates concerning the Bible are so far-reaching, and have such vast consequences to other minds, we cannot consider them from the view-point of personal comfort and desire. If there are those who declare that, unless the stars are precisely what they have always been taught to believe them, they will no longer look upward for help and guidance, it becomes the plain duty of those who are of soberer mind to speak out. If there are those who insist that, unless the family or the church can be shown to be of immediate divine creation, its value is discredited and its authority abrogated, there is urgent need that the sanctions attaching to a purely human institution,

growing out of human nature and moulded by its enlarging needs, should be plainly set forth. If it is not a matter of indifference to ourselves how we use the Bible or whether we use it at all, neither is it a matter of indifference to others; and yet there is a wide-spread feeling, due largely to an imperfect understanding of the results of Biblical criticism, that, since the Bible is not in all respects what it was once believed to be, it has outlived its usefulness, and may be neglected without loss or harm. It is just because the Bible is so precious to us that we would gladly use it in peace, without questioning another's use of it, that we are in sympathy bound, uncongenial though the work may be, to help those who now treat it with indifference to appreciate its real value.

GREEK AND HEBREW LITERATURE UNDULY PRAISED
AND CONDEMNED.

The reference just made to Lucretius suggests an instructive analogy between the course which the Hebrew books have had in popular estimation and that taken by the classics, particularly by the literature of the nation which, after the Jews, has done most to fashion our higher civilization, the Greeks. In extra-Jewish civilization Homer once filled the place that the Bible has filled among us. It may be that Plato's proposal to expurgate Homer aroused as much resentment as the plan of expurgating the Christian Scriptures has evoked in our

day, and the admission that "even Homer nods" may have been deemed as heretical once as is now the assertion that even the Bible errs. There are still a few enthusiastic lovers of Greek literature who might almost seem to exclaim over Homer and Æschylus, Demosthenes, and Plato, "It is the voice of a God, and not of a man." Yet on the other hand are heard cries of fetish and fetish-worship, as if all lovers of Greek were doing homage to a dead thing which cannot profit, and trying to seduce the rest of the world to join in their idolatrous worship. The "Greek Controversy" has been carried on so far mainly by those who cry "divine" on the one side and those who cry "fetish" on the other; while those who shrink from what seems to them fulsome praise, but who know nevertheless that their love for Greek literature is not fetish-worship, have hitherto kept silence in an evil time. When partisanship is rife, sane patriotism hardly gets a hearing. Before condemning Laodicea for lukewarmness, let us take into account the extremes of heat and cold by which she is judged. As with Greek, so with the Bible. The cry divine has provoked the retort fetish; but the time has now come for those who have no superstitious reverence for either Greek or Hebrew literature, but who recognize that both are rich educative products of human genius, to let their influence be felt. And, if the cause is sought for the neglect into which each literature has fallen, it

will be found to be the same in both cases. So long as Greek was a prescribed study, so long as it held a factitious elevation in popular favor, it was taught often by young men of insufficient equipment, both native and acquired, who, moreover, were using the royal profession of teaching merely as a stepping-stone to another vocation, and consequently had little heart in their work. That Greek has become to many nothing more than a fetish is due largely to the unworthy priests of learning, who have ministered at her shrine. Greek could be regarded as a dead language only when the literature was separated from the life of the people. When taught by modern methods as revealing national habits and character, and not as illustrating rules of grammar and prosody, Euripides and Aristophanes become intensely vital and fascinating. Hebrew literature has fared in precisely the same way. Its popular teachers, chilling poetry into prose and cramping the flowing diction of prophets and apostles within the narrow, rigid bonds of a formal theology, are directly responsible for most of the indifference into which the Bible has fallen. But the purpose and the result of the much maligned "Higher Criticism" are to enable us to read the Bible as a literature revealing national, human life, and not as a collection of proof texts for theological propositions. And as Greek, forced to take its chance among the competing studies of a college curriculum, in which com-

petition only enthusiastic teachers with vital insight can survive, and only earnest students will be attracted, is even now beginning to regain its lost prestige by reason of its humanities, so the Bible, given a fair field, with no favors or prejudices, left to make its way by its own intrinsic worth, will again commend itself to thoughtful men, if not as manna sent from heaven, then at least as good wholesome bread of earth. As Paul taught that there was no salvation for the Jew unless he gave up his fancied birthright prerogative, and presented himself before God not as a Jew, but as a man, so the only salvation for the Jewish and the Greek literature lies in the abandonment of traditional claims and the appeal of each to human interests and human needs. Yet, since the traditional claims of the Bible are now popularly disallowed, it has become more needful to dispel prejudices than to deny favors, not to cavil at the supposed measure of the angel, but to prove that it is the actual measure of a man. Our present duty is not to uproot tares, always a disagreeable and usually a profitless task, but to sow wheat.

In the foregoing parallel we have intimated the premises and the method of future study. Obviously, in view of the audience sought by this little book, the method used must be a method of approach, and not a method of retreat. Indeed, the fault one finds with much that has been written of late about the Bible is not that the conclusions are

false, but that they are reached by a process of negation, by backing away from false positions. One of the latest and, in many respects, one of the most satisfactory books that have appeared recently on this subject opens with the assertion that "all of us—that is to say, all who call themselves or wish to be called Christians—agree in saying that the Bible is inspired," and then proceeds by a critical study of the book itself to determine the content of the word "inspired," ruling out of it in the end nearly every quality that has been supposed to distinguish an inspired from an uninspired book. But, although this eliminating process may make already existing converts more just and sensible, it can never win those who are without the pale. The bridge offers an admirable way over for those who esteem the Bible higher than they ought; but it has no pier on the side of those who do not value it so highly as they should, and there is no approach from that quarter. One likes better to advance toward the truth than to fall back upon it. Our question therefore must be not how much of the old thought of the Bible can we still hold without ignoring too seriously the results of Biblical study or denying its method, but to what thought of the Bible can we come on the basis of those results and under the guidance of those methods. Ours is the method of advance, and not of retreat.

THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE.

To begin with, then, *the Bible is Literature*. In a certain sense, all printed or written matter is literature; but the term usually has a narrower and nobler application. No one, probably, would seriously question that Hamlet is literature and Todhunter's Algebra is not, that Walton's "Complete Angler" lies on one side of an imaginary line and a shop catalogue of rods, flies, and fishing tackle on the other; but it is hard to say just where the line should be drawn and what is the principle of discrimination. Making no pretence at exactness, but classifying roughly and broadly, we may say, perhaps, that whatever has no other object than to impart information, to communicate fact, is not literature, but only that which aims also to inspire or please. Every book which holds the facts alone as important, and endeavors to report them as accurately and tersely as possible, disdaining color and appeal, belongs outside the province of literature, properly so called. Of course, this distinction is one of prominence or emphasis rather than of absolute difference, since the perception of truth in even its baldest form inspires and satisfies; and the moral and emotional nature is reached permanently only by the communication of truth. Nevertheless, it will serve as a working principle of classification. Whatever, therefore, appeals solely to the understanding, ignoring the sensibilities and

the reason (properly so called), cannot be classed as literature. Moreover, the word is usually restricted still more closely. A novel which stirs only the sensibilities, and those usually of the lowest order, would hardly be dignified as literature, even though it had a basis of fact. By common consent, poetry is the highest, truest form of literature, and the essential of poetry lies in the presence of the creative imagination in the author and in his power to evoke a like activity on the part of the reader. To the degree that a book appeals to the senses by its beauty and completeness of form, to the understanding by its fidelity to nature, if not to fact, to the reason by the largeness and universality of its view, is it worthy to be called literature.

Judged even by the strictest standard, the Bible deserves to be classed as literature. It is deficient only in beauty of form; and even in this particular certain of the early legends, some of the Psalms, passages in Deuteronomy and the prophets, and the Book of Ruth, will not suffer by comparison with any other literature of antiquity. Moreover, while the Bible professes to deal with facts, the giving of information is not its chief object. The Biblical author is not an annalist. His facts are picked, organized, and marshalled for a purpose,—for inspiration, not information. “These things are written that ye may believe, and that, believing, ye may have life,” might justly be inscribed as motto on the entire Biblical literature. In the early

legends we have the folk-lore and fireside tales of Israel; and folk-lore and fireside tales always transmit lessons, and not fact. The historian wrote that through his recital of the past new heart might arise in the people, new confidence that, as God had been with the fathers, so would he be also with the children, if only they would obey his will as revealed in national history. This practical purpose often leads to a shifting of emphasis or even to a perversion of facts, according as one or another writer wishes to draw that lesson from the past which will serve his immediate object. The prophets wrote and spoke not to announce that the Assyrians were at hand, but to arouse a people alienated from their God, and hurrying on to a catastrophe of his sending, to repentance and renewed fealty to Jehovah. The Bible, then, deals with facts, but with facts as bearers of encouragement and warning. It has also that largeness and universality of view which is a mark of literature. The nation is regarded as the unit; and the individual is presented not in his individuality, but in his relation to the larger whole of the state. The national fortunes and destiny are the whole in relation to which every fact is viewed; and in the later prophets even the history of Israel itself is seen in the light of the will of the universal God concerning all the peoples. Events are episodes in the drama of national history, and the national history itself is

regarded finally as one scene in the great world-drama. Altogether apart, however, from mere theory as to the requirements of literature and the degree to which those requirements are met by the Biblical books, no one who has the literary instinct can open the Bible anywhere, unless he be unfortunate enough to happen upon certain passages that are to the whole what Homer's catalogue of ships is to the Iliad, without becoming aware on the instant that he has to do with literature, and with literature of a pretty high order, too.

THE BIBLE AS REVELATION.

And, because it is literature, the Bible is also revelation; for literature reveals the character and temper of its author. In a book which is intended solely to transmit facts the personality of the author is an intrusion and a blemish, but it is not so with literature. Cardinal Newman's description of literature as "subjective" — that is, as revealing the thought and feeling of the author in the presence of facts, and not merely as communicating the facts themselves — makes it evident that literature, just because it is literature, is also a revelation of the author. Yet, if one test of literature is the clearness and beauty with which the author reveals himself, another test is the largeness of the self that is revealed. Sometimes it is only his individual self that an author shows, sometimes it is the larger self of a school, a community, or a

nation that he represents; and the literary kings of the world are those who, like Shakspeare, give voice to our universal human nature. We can only dream as yet of a literature in which universal nature shall speak through the lips of "the semi-god whom we await." Literature, then, reveals not merely the author, but also the larger self, of which he may be only dimly conscious, that finds its fulfilment in the communal life of the nation, humanity, or the world. The worth, therefore, of literature as literature is determined in part, and its value as a revelation of the truth, and not merely of the author's mind, is determined wholly by the degree to which it expresses the thoughts and feelings in the presence of fact which are natural to our common humanity.

Now, the Bible is a national, not a personal, literature. The earliest book in the Bible and the latest are nearly a thousand years apart, and there are legendary tales which even in their present form must go nearly another thousand years farther back. The great achievement so far of Biblical criticism has been to put the contents of these documents into perspective. Instead of "a confused blotch of color all upon one plane, . . . with no perspective in the still distances, with no parallax in the moving objects, no clear identification, no familiar recognition of anything, but a dim and mystic sense of light that gives us vision," we are able now to trace in the literature a line of light

which marks the course of a nation's growth. Moreover, since the Bible contains the literature of a nation, it contains also the revelation of a nation. That these books have survived is evidence that they were congenial to the national thought and spirit. It is only the author whose works bear the national stamp, because his self is in real harmony with the self of the nation, whose works live in the national memory. Slowly the Hebrew literature was winnowed. The books that remained were chosen and gathered not by a formal decree, but by national instinct. Such formal judgments as there may have been can only have recorded the popular verdict, they cannot have coerced it. That the various writings have become one book testifies to a unity among them corresponding to the unity of the growing nation. The books are one in natural growth, and not by mechanical union. While, therefore, the separate writings reveal the minds of their authors and compilers, the Bible as a whole reveals the thought, the growing thought, of the nation. The revelation of the Bible, aside from the revelations of its component parts, can be only that which is common to all,—the thought which deepened in the growing national life and is revealed with increasing clearness in the growing national literature. When Luther taught that the value of a Biblical book depended upon the clearness with which it taught Christ, he was anticipating vaguely the modern conclusion that, as there is

a chronological, so there is also a logical perspective in the books of the Bible. The real "Christ" of the Hebrew was their developing thought.

THE BIBLE THE BOOK OF ISRAEL'S RELIGION.

That the Bible is the literature of Israel, and hence the revelation of the national thought, is a sufficient justification for urging its studious use; for no nation has affected more profoundly the best life of our time. In the Jewish service there is a sentence which declares in a flash of almost arrogant triumph that, while all the enemies of Israel have perished, "we march on over their graves." The boast is not vain. Israel has survived, and presents the only instance in history of a nation that without a home and in unparalleled vicissitudes has kept its nationality substantially intact. In the breaking up of kingdoms and the disintegration of social systems the Jew has stood firm; and, if we inquire into the secret of his marvellous vitality, we shall find it in the religion of the Jew. The religion of Israel has been and is the bond of Israel, and from beginning to end the Bible is the book of this religion. The chief characteristic of the nation is also the chief characteristic of the book which contains its extant early literature; and, therefore, if we would learn the elements of permanence in national life, we must turn to Israel, to the religion of Israel and to the Bible, which reveals that religion in its growth from primitive

stages up to a wondrous consummation in Jesus and Paul. And, wherever the religion of the Jew has gone, it has proved a strengthening, unifying power. The lines of Joaquin Miller apply nearly as well to every civilized nation on the globe as they do to Russia:

“Who girt the thews of your young prime,
And bound your fierce divided force?
Why, who but Moses shaped your course
United down the grooves of time?
Your mighty millions all to-day
The hated, homeless Jew obey.
Who taught all poetry to you?
The Jew,—the hated, homeless Jew.

“Who taught you tender Bible tales
Of honey-lands, of milk and wine,
Of happy peaceful Palestine?
Of Jordan's holy harvest-vales?
Who gave the patient Christ? I say,
Who gave your Christian creed? Yea, yea,
Who gave your very God to you?
Your Jew! Your Jew! Your hated Jew.”

When one reflects upon the prominence of the Jew in our highest civilization, and realizes that this prominence has been attained solely because of his religious thought, so that the Jewish books are revered as no others are in the civilized world, and families that have no other books, not even the masterpieces of their own nation, do have these, while in millions of homes the names of Abraham and Moses, of Jesus and Paul, are house-

hold words, though the names of Shakspeare, Emerson, and Browning are utterly unknown, the folly of neglecting the Bible, which contains the secret of Israel's greatness, becomes stupendous almost beyond description. The time will come when an educated man will be as ashamed to be ignorant of the Bible as he is now to be ignorant of Socrates, Cicero, and Milton.

JEHOVAH OF ISRAEL.

What, then, is the secret of Israel's unity and force as the Bible reveals it? "Properly speaking," says Robertson Smith, "the heathen deities have no personal character in the sense of a fixed and independent habit of will. . . . Not so Jehovah. He approved himself a true God by showing throughout the history of Israel that he had a will and a purpose of his own,—a purpose rising above the current ideas of his worshippers and a will directed with steady consistency to a moral aim." Israel was the nation which he had chosen of all the nations on earth to reveal his character and to carry out his will. Hence arose the consciousness of a national destiny which was to perfect righteousness in the nation and to establish righteousness on the earth. As this conviction grew among the people, it was accompanied by an intense moral seriousness. Life was taken gravely, not flippantly, and this resulted in a constantly rising ideal of righteousness. The present

security and future glory of Israel depended solely upon its allegiance to Jehovah and its obedience to his righteous will. The Bible reveals and urges that national ideal. The Bible did not create it, but only reveals the process by which one prophet after another seized upon the nascent consciousness of it, and brought it into clearer, more definite expression, till it was finally read back into the early legends of the people. It is the glory of Israel that its religious leaders came to the full consciousness of that principle which had ruled nations, although unperceived, from the beginning, and declared positively, as once and again the nation lapsed into immorality and ceremonialism, that only righteousness exalteth a nation. For, if "a nation is a moral organism," and only as such can keep its identity in the unfolding life of the world, ethical seriousness alone can make for the strength and perpetuity of a nation, and lack of seriousness is the solvent of States. The law which all nations in their prosperity had obeyed, and which all must ever obey, was clearly discerned first in Israel; and the firm assurance of a national destiny, conditional upon national righteousness, kept the people united. Only in the perception of that law and by allegiance to that ideal can any State endure.

THE NEED OF THE BIBLE IN MODERN CIVILIZATION.

There is an ancient Jewish proverb that "the breath of school-children is the life of the State," and it is a fixed belief among us that with an educated citizenship is bound up the welfare of the republic. Nevertheless, the accumulation of facts and the attainment of a scientific habit of mind will not preserve a nation unless there is also in all classes of the people a profound realization of a national ideal of righteousness. Now there is no nation that has felt that so deeply as the Jews; and there is no book that is so permeated with that thought as the winnowed literature of the Hebrew people, which sets forth the ideal with a directness and cogency found nowhere else. Therefore is the Bible an essential factor in education. Therefore are we called upon, not only as students of history, but also as lovers of country, to reinstate that book, to make all men, particularly young men, familiar with the literature which contains the most perfect revelation of the only ideal that can keep any State alive. The revelation of *the Bible*, the thought that grows as the nation grows, and binds into unity its literature, as it bound into unity the nation, presented in innumerable ways, enforced by argument and experience, taught with fervent patriotism and religious ardor, is this: Because God is righteous, the only way of success is the way of righteousness.

OLD TESTAMENT RELIGION.

It is easy to imagine the scorn with which this may be regarded by some who remember with what an altogether unlovely result the old Hebrew ideal has taken possession of English-speaking people. "In Cromwell's time," writes Frederic Harrison, "the Bible was almost the sole morality, the sole poetry, the sole religion, familiar to all and accessible in print. Its mighty imagery, its majestic utterances as to man's soul and God's power, its mystical ecstasy, its scheme of sin and death, of future life and judgment, of man's vileness and the nothingness of this transitory life, wrought into the core of the finest and deepest spirits of that age. . . . But no man in that age drank it into his whole nature with more intense reality than did Cromwell." Do we care for a return of Cromwell's rule? Was the condition of New England under the Mathers, for instance, so prosperous and satisfactory as to make us long for its reappearance? Yet this is the sort of civilization that the Bible creates, these were men who had received the Hebrew national ideal. True; but Puritanism represents only one stage in the evolution of Hebrew thought. Puritanism fed upon the green apples of Hebrew thought, and not upon the ripe, mellow fruit with which the New Testament abounds. Stanley's criticism of the Scottish Church is applicable to the same stage of religious

evolution in England and in America. "The immense preponderance of the teaching of the Old Testament and of some of the most transitory parts of the Old Testament over the New, and over the most essential part of the New, cannot but have cribbed, confined, and soured the religious teaching of the country. . . . Of one of the most eminent lay politicians of the Covenanting Church, Lord Macaulay remarks that 'He had a text of the Old Testament ready for every occasion. . . . It is a striking characteristic of the man and of the school in which he had been trained that in all the mass of his writing which has come down to us there is not a word indicating that he had ever heard of the New Testament.'" There lies the secret of Puritan unloveliness. It had not yet reached the New Testament stage of the religious development, without which the Old Testament stage could not be made perfect. The Old Testament requires the fulfilment of the New, as the New requires the foundation of the Old.

Between the history of the Old Testament and New Testament books there is a remarkable similarity. Perhaps a hundred years after the death of Jesus there were in circulation among the Christian churches many documents purporting to contain lives of Jesus written by immediate apostles, and also many letters purporting to have been written by eminent disciples, "whose fame was in all the churches." Four centuries later, however, most of

these documents had quietly dropped out of sight; and the books which now form our New Testament canon alone survived in authoritative use. As in the case of the Old Testament, the selection was made by instinct, and was only ratified by formal action. The books which were most in harmony with the genius of the Church survived, while the others disappeared; and, singularly enough, essentially the same convictions dominated the Church and regulated the sifting of documents that had prevailed among the Jews.

NEW TESTAMENT RELIGION.

The Church was conscious of a unique relation to God even more close and tender than had been the case with the old-time Jews. Moreover, the two notes of the early Church were purity and charity. Within its fold a higher ethical standard was held up than the outside world obeyed; and, besides this stress upon morality, there was also a charity, a helpfulness, that was almost peculiarly Christian. And, above all else, there was the devotion to Jesus as the divine personality in whom purity and charity found their perfect embodiment. Hence the ideals of Jesus were the criteria of the New Testament books. Consequently, the Old Testament and the New cannot be separated without injustice to the Old Testament and peril to the New. We are impatient at the bigotry and intolerance of Puritanism till we see that it gives birth in

time to an Emerson; and, similarly, Jesus was not a graft on the Jewish tree, but the natural, inevitable fruit of that intense moral earnestness which characterized his ancestors. Hence it is unjust to the Old Testament to judge it apart from its fulfilment in Jesus; and, as the history of the Church shows, it imperilled the thought of Jesus to intrust it to those who had not been trained in the Jewish passion for righteousness. It is pre-eminently fortunate that the books which compose our New Testament were selected before the Jewish impulse had spent itself in the Church and while the little brotherhoods of believers were struggling to keep themselves unspotted from the world, else that sublime ideal, forgotten for a thousand years, might have been lost to the world forever. The fulfilment of Jewish thought by Jesus and Paul in the *individual* relation between God and man upon which they laid stress,—it was no longer the nation, but the individual that was Son of God,—in the larger scope of Paul's universalism, in the changed notion of success, and particularly in the idea of love as the fulfilment of righteousness, cannot be an abiding possession save as it grows out of that old Jewish root of ethical earnestness. The Puritans kept the plant without the flower. We are in danger of trying to keep the flower without the plant. Thought very like the Christian had appeared in the world before, but had perished simply because it had not the strong Jewish right-

eousness behind it; and it is still true that enduring grace can develop only in man or nation schooled to moral earnestness, and that love which abides must have its root in ethical seriousness. The Old Testament and the New Testament cannot be separated in national or in individual progress.

THE NEED OF BOTH OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW
TESTAMENT RELIGION.

Yet, since the Christian Church carried on the Jewish succession, having at first the same firm organic unity by reason of the same bond, righteousness fulfilled in love, and after a time leading an independent life of its own, receiving influences from other sources than Jewish and developing according to its own genius, it would be fairer to say that the Bible, including both Testaments, contains the revelation of the kingdom of God. When we pray, "Thy kingdom come," our desire is that there shall come upon the earth that state of things in which justice shall everywhere prevail and love shall everywhere rule; and back of the prayer lies the hope, the expectation, that the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord by grasping each the national ideal of righteousness. If it be true that that condition of society has gradually been coming to pass on the earth, and if it can be shown that the lines of its advance are the very lines that were taken by the developing Hebrew consciousness from Amos to

Paul, then we should be justified in saying that the ideal history of the Hebrew people is the history of the world in miniature, and that the revelation of the Bible is a revelation not only of Jewish thought and feeling in the presence of facts, but also of the thought and feeling of progressive humanity; that, in fact, the revelation of the Bible is true,—a revelation of the kingdom of God. One hesitates to speak with assurance on such a large possibility; but is it not true that, as men grow in wisdom and love, they find that their thoughts of life and duty, of God and man, are growing toward the highest Bible ideals? Is it not true that all the stages of religion, from the thought of God as a being in human form up to our dawning conception of God as immanent reason and love, are represented in the Bible from Genesis to the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle of John? Is it not true that the progress of the thought of worship from cult to character is anticipated there? Is not our modern idea of society as an organism a thoroughly Biblical idea? How can we better express the modern view of ethics than by the New Testament command, "Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another"? In the conflict of ideas is it not true that the ultimate ideals of the Bible are proving themselves true by the fact of survival? It is becoming evident that the ideals which came into existence as the fruition of the long process of

Hebrew development are the very ideals toward which the indwelling spirit of God is bringing humanity. Then the spirit that is in humanity was especially in that Hebrew nation. It was an inspired people. Then by the path which the Jew trod in quicker time, we are coming to his deepest and ripest religious beliefs. The evolution of religion in humanity appears to be a replica of the evolution of religion in Hebrew thought; and, if that be true, the revelation of Hebrew thought contained in the Bible is also a revelation of God.

THE THOUGHT OF GOD IN THE
BIBLE.

THE THOUGHT OF GOD IN THE BIBLE.

BY REV. FRANCIS B. HORNBRooke.

WHAT do we care for the Bible? Does it have any real value for you and me? What is the use of reading and studying it? Perhaps questions like these shock us; but it will be a good thing for us all if we can be shocked into an effort of serious thinking, and compelled to answer them in the light of our real thought. For, when we do set out in downright earnest to face them, we shall know at once where we are and whither we are tending. Many men and women have inherited certain reverent feelings about the Bible. They have been told, and they think they believe, it is the word of God, given to lead and guide them with an infallible guidance and direction such as no other book can give. They are greatly grieved if anybody suggests that any other idea of the Bible is possible, but very often you will find that these people do not know much about it. They read it very little, and they never dream of using in any real every-day sort of fashion the clearest precepts it contains. They regard the Bible as the Chinese

say we ought to regard the gods, "revere them, and keep them at a distance." They care for it on account of certain traditional notions about it.

Then there are others who bluntly say "we have no use for the Bible, and we care nothing for it. It serves no purpose that we can see. Much of its history is incredible, and many of its precepts have no application to daily necessities; and we can make our way through life just as well without it." And the result is that often they know absolutely nothing about the Bible.

Now we want to arrest both these tendencies,—the tendency to accept the Bible without any real reason for doing so as well as the tendency to reject it. Is there not a real reason for the interest which most religious people have in the book? Does it not contain something which ought to give it perennial worth?

We might, if we were so pleased, urge the reading and study of it because of its literary value, or because of the fact that its phrases have become part of our literature. This is well so far as it goes, but it is an argument which appeals to a limited number. Very few people care for literature. The Bible can have no real value for us save in so far as that value is a religious one. And, when I speak of its religious value, I do not mean to imply that we must find in it a set of precepts and special commands which we are to follow merely because it contains them, but I do mean to say that it has

a real religious value because of the impression of God it produces. Religion is the sense of the infinite life. The book that impresses me with the sense of that life which best satisfies my mind and heart has the greatest religious value for me. It may have been written ages ago, but it is a new and living book still because of the impression it makes here and now. If it does that, all other reasons for reading it, good as in themselves they may be, are superfluous; and all reasons urged for not reading it are altogether insufficient.

Now I have been reading the Bible a great many years. I read it as a boy at my mother's knee. I have studied it as a man, and I love to read and study it now. No doubt there are a great many things that further study will make clearer to me than they are now. I am aware that my knowledge of many things in it is vague and undefined. There are notions about the Bible which I hold which some day I may find were mistaken. Well, let it be so. All that makes no difference in regard to the impression, that amid all other changes of opinion is growing stronger, that its total effect is to impress me with an idea of God as no other book I know does. The value of the Bible, to me, lies in that.

Let me tell you, then, in what ways God makes himself known to me in the Bible. In doing so, I shall not assume any theory of the Bible based on criticism old or new. I simply take it as it stands,

read it, and then tell you the thoughts of God it has awakened within me.

GOD AND THE NATION.

The first thing that strikes me is that in the Bible the nation is under the care and direction of God. Its life is sustained by him, and by him its destinies are guided. The state is not unreligious. It is the organization which fulfils the divine purpose. The king on the throne, the soldier on the field, both alike render a service fully as religious as the priest at the altar or the prophet who proclaims his vision. The history of Israel, however else it may have been written, was undoubtedly written by those who saw the presence of God everywhere manifested in it. They interpreted all its episodes by reference to the divine purpose. Others might see in the movements of nomadic tribes under the guidance of Abraham or Isaac or Jacob nothing more than wanderings to and fro for better pasture, but the Bible historians bid us see in them the providential preparations for a nation whose God was the Lord. The heathen accounts of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt only indicate the outcome of long years of conflict between one people and another, but the Bible shows the influence of divine power ordering events. To us the waters of the Red Sea were moved aside and the dry land prepared for the fleeing host to pass over by a mighty wind, not unusual in that part of

the world; but to the Bible writers it is a special deliverance by the power of Jehovah, who is leading his people with an "outstretched arm." While the people wander here and there in the wilderness, apparently without a purpose and without a plan, these old records tell how they were learning the commandments of God, which should fuse them into a nation. And so it is all through the history of Israel. Did it go up and conquer Canaan, God fought on its side. Were the people successful, it was his favor bestowed because of their faithfulness. Were they defeated and their lands spoiled by the invader, the enemy was the hand of the Almighty chastening them for their sin. Thus all events in the entire history of Israel were related to the mind and purpose of God. The king ruled to manifest his justice. The warrior fought to establish his will. The fruits of harvest declared his love for his people. In reading the history, we almost lose sight of second causes, and see only the manifestation of the divine will. It is not here necessary for me to consider whether these accounts are historical or not. That is a matter altogether beside my purpose. It is enough that in this record of a nation's history I find it so imbued and permeated with the presence of God. It is enough that I find him revealed as the real power beneath all its efforts, the real guide of all its movements, the ultimate influence in all its purposes and aims.

If the Old Testament were all, one would have the right to feel that there was something exclusive in all this. Why should God care so for only one people? Why should the Jew, as he was often tempted to do, set himself up as the special favorite of Heaven? It is the revelation of God we have in Christianity that leads to the true and broad interpretation of all this. That revealed God as caring for all men, as fulfilling his purpose among all people. It showed that to him there was neither Jew nor Gentile. In the light of this thought, it becomes easy for me to see how what was represented as true of one people is equally true of all. I can read a divine purpose in every people's history. When I cannot discern that purpose clearly, this thought of God as fulfilling himself in the history of humanity enables me to trust in a purpose, even though it lies far beyond my present vision. Thus the Old and New Testaments, when taken together, deepen within me the sense of the presence of God beneath all the activities of nations. They help me to see that nothing is "common or unclean," but that through all the manifold movements of our ordinary lives the pure purposes of Heaven are finding their fulfilment. All life is made sacred to me because my Bible has taught me that God is in it. That Book reminds me that an Isaiah was no less a statesman because he was a prophet, and all the more a prophet because he had the eyes of a statesman and the heart of a patriot.

And it sometimes seems to me that we shall never find the elevation of tone and the nobleness of purpose we so long for in our national life until we have been so filled with the influence of the prophetic thought of the nation revealed in the Old Testament that we shall be convinced that the nation is nothing less than the organized manifestation of the will of the highest.

GOD AND THE INDIVIDUAL.

Then I find God made known to me in the Bible by the influence he is represented as exerting in the lives of individuals. I see him there touching certain natures, and so transforming them. I find God made known as he is manifested in man. We say a great deal about the manifestation of God in nature, as he reveals himself in the forces and arrangements of the outer world; and this is well. But, after all, I cannot help believing that our best conceptions of God come through the men and women who have been so related to the life of God that they have been enabled to tell us something about him in and through their own lives. And it is the charm of the Bible for me that the divine life is thus communicated to me in the biographies of the men who figure in the biographical sketches which fill it. God is there, it is true, in nature. He appears in the beating of the storm, in the flash of the lightning and the peal of the thunder. He bows the heavens, and comes down.

His beauty clothes the flowers of the field, and his universal love appears in the rain that falls alike on the just and the unjust; but, more than in these, I find him revealed in the Bible in the human spirit. I feel the impulse of the divine when I read of Abraham's obedience to the call which bids him leave his country and his father's house, to wander whither he may be called. I see the revelation of a higher thought of God shining on the face of Moses, and giving him power to lift his people out of bondage and to unite them into a nation conscious of a mighty destiny.

I know no sweeter revelation than that which comes in the story of the child Samuel, whose heart responds to the divine appeal, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." No grander sense of the strength of the divine purpose can be conceived than that which reveals itself in Elijah, the rugged prophet of Israel. The majesty of the call to Isaiah's work engraves itself on my memory as I read of that vision of his, when the seraphim cried to one another, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts," when the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and when, in response to the word of the Lord, "Whom shall I send?" the prophet replies, "Here am I: send me." I learn, too, in the shrinking of Jeremiah from the work to which he is called, and the promise of the Lord to put words in his mouth and courage in his heart, how a man's weakness may be transformed into

might by the vivid consciousness that God is with him. But, deep as is the sense of God that comes to me in these experiences of patriarch and prophet, deeper still is that which is borne in upon me as I catch the spirit of Jesus in the gospel story. Near as God seems to me in other lives, that life of his brings him still nearer, and makes him dearer to my heart. In the record of his words and deeds the divine presence is no longer a vague sentiment. It has become a living power. The more closely I follow him, the more real God appears. I have no theories about his relation to God; and I care for none, so long as I am sure that I can "see in him the fatherhood and heart of God revealed." I feel the influence of his personality to impress man with the deeper consciousness of God in the words and works of his immediate followers. They all seem aglow with the thought of God. That has lifted them above the concern for all other things. For that thought they live in earnest, and gladly suffer and die. For that reason the Epistles of Paul and John have a real value to me. In them I find the words of men who were hidden with Christ in God. Goethe says that, if you want to learn anything about any subject, you must go and live among the people to whom that is the whole work of their lives. If that be true of ordinary knowledge, much more must it be true of our knowledge of God. If we want to know him, we shall know him best by living in communion with those whose meat and

drink it was to know and to do his will. And God has provided a means for doing this in the revelation of himself in and through natures that have allowed him to shine forth in what they did and what they were. He reveals himself to us in those records of lives whom his indwelling has made strong for the present duty, radiant with loving-kindness, and faithful to the highest things even unto death. In the Bible, as everywhere, God's best interpreters are human souls.

GOD IN THE MORAL NATURE OF MAN.

Again, God reveals himself in the Bible according to the development of man's moral nature. His revelation there is always in correspondence with the moral condition of the one to whom it is given. Every higher vision of God is the result of some higher conception of right. To the pure God shows himself pure. Nowhere is this more evident than in the work of the prophets. It is they who by their long-continued efforts created in the minds of the Jewish people the idea of a moral governor of the universe. And how did they reach that? Simply through the stress of their sense of the absolute importance of justice between man and man. There was a great deal of what called itself religion about them. There were temples and sacrifices and Sabbaths and feast days and fast days. There was a great deal of religious confidence and vain glory. But to the great prophets of Israel all

this was wholly beside the essential matter. They regard all these religious usages and forms as mockeries of God. To please him, men must cease to do evil and learn to do well. They must no longer grind the faces of the poor. Honest dealing was better than sacrifices, and deeds of righteousness and love better than rivers of oil. Nowhere in the world can there be found such a reiteration of the moral ideal as is to be found in the writings of the great prophets of Israel; and it is because of the greatness of their moral ideal that their conception of God is greater. They could not have known him as righteous if they had not felt as they did the absolute need of righteous relations between man and man. Thus in all the course of the prophetic teaching I find God revealing himself according to the moral vision of man. His revelation is seen there not to be arbitrary, but always in correspondence with his developing moral faculty.

GOD IN CHRIST.

But we have a nobler illustration of this than in the prophets, and that is in the life of Jesus. We all agree that in him the thought of God reached its height. The ages have added nothing to the religious value of his words of God. They are the highest that have been spoken. And why? Simply because his nature is revealed as the purest and holiest. His moral demands are the highest, and his life fulfils them as no other does; and so

his revelation of God remains unsurpassed. What a lesson for us to ponder lies in all that!

What a value the Bible has for us to-day because of it! We sometimes think that the demand for morality which prevails in our time will lessen the importance of religion. When we read our Bible, we learn, as we learn nowhere else, that the demand for a higher ethical standard is only the prelude to a more real and noble religious faith. If we learned no more than this from our Bible, it would have for us an incalculable value. And then, on the other hand, I learn from this fact of the way in which God reveals himself in the Bible how to test any system of religious faith. Has it a nobler conception of right-doing? Does it help men and women to deal more justly and kindly with those about them? Does it form a spirit of self-devotion, which seeks to find itself in making others happier and better? If it has, then the Bible tells me that it has the substance of the truth in it. If it has not, then it is a delusion and a sham, and God is not in it, because he does not reveal himself as he is to the dishonest, the hard-hearted, and the self-centred. The vision of himself is not to the man or woman whose energies are all exhausted in a service of self, but to him who came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, "and to give his life a ransom for many."

THE UNFOLDING OF THE THOUGHT OF GOD.

Again, as I read the Bible, I find that God reveals himself progressively. He does not shine forth in all his splendor, and so blind the eyes of his children. He adapts himself to their varying capacities, gives them the light they are able to bear, and so leads them on from the little they have to still more and more. He does not represent himself in the Bible as one who demands that his children should know him altogether and understand all about him. No; but he shows himself as one who asks only that they should be true to the thought of him that is dear to them, and into which they are now able to enter. Abraham's conception of God might seem to many thoughtful people to-day very unsatisfactory and narrow. No doubt his theology was all mistaken; but some ray of the light of God had shone across his path, and he was accepted because he followed with faithful heart the light he had. When Moses saw God as the eternal, as the one who would keep his covenant with his people, he was sustained by it, and enabled by the strength it gave him to bind his people together, and lead them forth out of their bondage into freedom. It was enough for him and enough for his people, and it was enough for him in whom they trusted; but it was a ray of light piercing the darkness, not the full light of God's coming day. When Elijah declared that Jehovah was the only

God of Israel, it was a great word; and, in battling for it, he won a great victory. The people of Israel advanced a step farther in their knowledge of God when they decided to follow him. But very soon there was need of a higher teaching. Jehovah was not merely their God, to be worshipped and revered because he prospered them in their basket and in their store, and helped them to win victories over their enemies. The service of such a God might well go together with the basest form of conduct and with total disregard of all righteous dealing.

Then comes the grand call of the prophets not to worship Jehovah because he was their God, but because he was the God who rules in righteousness. For a time there may have lingered a lower element in even this higher thought. The God of righteousness would be pleased with and prosper his people if they did what was right. Only let them fulfil the high commands of right, and they would conquer all their enemies and succeed in all their endeavors. All this had a truth in it, but it was a limited and partial truth. Adversities that came when the nation seemed to be doing its best compelled a larger view of God's dealings. It forced thoughtful minds and hearts to ask whether it was necessary that the nation should have material prosperity, whether the righteousness of God might not be revealed in its own failure and defeat and even destruction. Thus there arose a

thought of God as ruling in righteousness, and using Israel as the means through which that righteousness was to prevail. Always through the whole of the Old Testament God is adapting his revelation to the growing faculties of his children, treating them as a wise teacher treats the little ones intrusted to him. Step by step he carries on the education of Israel, but the highest step is not yet reached. It is not enough that God should be revealed as righteousness. That aspect alone may at first inspire; but later, as its awful meaning dawns upon the mind, it may fill it with terror. The heart needs to realize his first best name; and Jesus tells us—in words, but better still in what he is—that that first best name is Love. And this way in which God reveals himself in the Bible teaches me two things. It teaches me in the first place that I need not fear for those nations and classes of men who still can only see some cruder conception of him. In his dealings with one people I learn to understand how he is dealing with all. In them I discover that every faithful soul is led by the light he has. God will not punish ignorance as a crime. He will not condemn to death the soul that cannot speak his higher, better name; but, through the little man sees, he will patiently and tenderly lead him on to the fuller vision of himself. God's progressive revelation of himself in the Bible is to me sign and token of his progressive revelation to all the nations of the

world. Some know him better than others, but all are being led and taught by him.

And the second thing I learn in all this is comfort for my own heart. I know so little of him, and that little at times seems very poorly defined and unreal. Shall I ever, I ask myself, be able to think of him in the right way? and is my present way of thinking of him worth anything? From such disheartening questionings I turn to my Bible, and find solace as I read. There I learn that it is not necessary for me to define, but to trust in him. It is not for me to be able to realize now the highest thought of him, but to submit myself to his guidance, and so be led "from glory to glory as by the spirit of the Lord."

HIS LOVE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Then how God is revealed in the New Testament. There I find him as love which answers to the love of my heart. He discloses himself to me as a father to his child. He cares for all with an equal care. His rain falls on the just and the unjust. Nothing lies outside his wise and loving thought.

He bids me seek him in full assurance that I shall find him. He awakens within me high desires, that he may help me to fulfil them. He arouses me to noble action, that he may endow me with strength to carry it on. He assures me that he who has begun a good work in me will carry it

on to its full accomplishment. He tells me he is the God of comfort in sorrow and peace in tribulation, and that he will lead me, if I trust in him, out of the present darkness into his own marvellous light. He shows himself to me as the one in whom and to whom and for whom are all things. He tells me that he will put all things under his feet and be all in all. He imbues me with the faith that he is not only above all things, apart from us, but that he is in us, a spirit inciting to obedience to the ideals of holiness and truth and right which he is always placing before us.

It may be that God reveals himself in ways that are clear to the heart of man in other books and other ways. I have no desire to limit the unfoldings of His Spirit to the spirit of man. If others can find him as well without the Bible, I have nothing to urge against them. Their experience only makes it clearer that there are many approaches to his presence. But among ourselves it will be often found that the books in which we find him revealed were written by those whose souls were quickened by contact with the Bible. Why should not we ourselves come into closer contact with it, and find refreshing in communion with the sources of inspiration? The lover of the beautiful in art, much as he prizes the beauty around him, nowhere finds the highest ideals of beauty as in the monuments of ancient Greek art, in the works of a people who lived in and for beauty; and the seeker

for God will nowhere find the impression of him so deep and vivid as in the writings of those who belonged to a race that was always thinking of its relations to him. The supreme justification of the use of the Bible to you and me now and here is in the fact that it reveals God to us in the way it does. So long as it does that, it needs no apology; and we are only losers when for other reasons we think fit to ignore it. Let critics find in it all the mistakes they please. Let them find fault, if they will, with its history, its chronology, and the details of its narratives. All that leaves its real use and value just the same. Heine said, "He that has lost his God can find him again in this book, and towards him who has never known him it wafts the breath of the divine word." So long as that is true, it must be a vital influence in the religious life of humanity.

THE REVELATION OF GOD IN MAN.

THE REVELATION OF GOD IN MAN.

BY REV. S. M. CROTHERS.

THEOLOGIANS who have made the distinction between "natural" and "revealed" religion have taken for granted that one is supplementary to the other. Some things, they say, are discovered by man's intelligence. These truths are fundamental, but are inadequate to the work of salvation. The existence of God and of the soul and the primary principles of righteousness belong to this order; but natural religion is cold and hard. It is the rock on which the home of the spirit may be built, but it is not that home itself. He who has nothing better is but an outcast on the earth.

It is only when one has begun to have doubts in regard to a special supernatural revelation that he begins earnestly to inquire into the reality and possibilities of natural religion: and too frequently the man awakes from the security of his early dogmatism to find everything uncertain. It is not simply that the house in which he has thus far lived has fallen, but that he finds no foundation for any other.

Does not one reason for this lie in the fact that the theological systems of Christendom have not in reality been built upon the basis of natural religion, but are the negation of it? Natural religion has its root in a great confidence in human nature. It trusts the processes of reason and the voice of conscience. It draws its arguments from the mind of the child and from the experience of the man.

But, unfortunately, the authorized teachers of religion have for generations been throwing discredit on the natural pieties. When reason has refused to accept self-contradictory doctrines, it has been charged with imbecility. It has no tests, it has been said, for divine truths; and conscience has fared no better. Its decisions have been overruled whenever the exigencies of theological speculation have required it. Its clearest insight has been esteemed of less value than the obscurest texts of holy writ. And, to crown all, a theory of man has been elaborated which, if true, would render any appeal to his intuitions impossible. For it is said that our nature, in its fallen state, is attuned to falsehood, and not to truth. The natural man is prone continually to evil, and delights to make and to believe a lie.

If this is so, then the only way by which religion can be authenticated must be by some miraculous interposition. It is not strange that those thus educated should rush headlong from blind accept-

ance of inherited dogmas to an equally blind rejection of all belief.

The work of a liberal religion is strenuous and difficult. It is not enough to pull down an unworthy superstructure in order to reveal the everlasting foundations. The foundation must be sought elsewhere than beneath the dogmatic systems with which we are familiar.

CONFIDENCE IN HUMAN NATURE.

The first effort must be to restore confidence in human nature and to show its real relation to the universe and to God. We are apt to think of ourselves as suppliants standing at the gate of some great temple. Within the temple, we say, the divine glory is revealed; but, alas! we stand outside, and knock in vain.

The word of a spiritual religion is, "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

God does not so much reveal himself *to* man as reveal himself *in* man. The human soul is not the beggar at the temple gate, but is itself the holy place. We ask for some miracle which shall attest the divine presence: but it were in vain to cause some greater manifestation of power in an unconscious world. The light might be tenfold more intense, mountains might rise to mightier heights, and nature be full of prodigies; but it would avail nothing if there were no creature endowed with

consciousness. Light is revealed only to the eye, and sound to the ear, and higher forces are revealed only through the development of higher faculties. Always the universe has been governed by unvarying law, but not always has this fact been revealed. At last a mind is found capable of being a mirror in which the mighty order is reflected. To that mind there is no chaos: there are no empty spaces, no unrelated facts. And the revelation of beauty comes when the poet is born, and the harmony of the universe is echoed by the harmony of the soul. And if righteousness is to be revealed, it must be through a struggle of the will. God might walk daily with his creatures in some sheltered Paradise, and they would know neither good nor evil. To the wanderer on the desert, to the soldier defying fate, to the martyr triumphing over death, the heights and depths of the moral law are made known.

REVELATION.

Natural religion may mean more than the lifeless residuum of metaphysics. It is not necessarily religion at its minimum, for it is susceptible of growth and spiritual intensity. Nor should the term be used in opposition to revealed religion. This is begging the question, for one may reverently accept a religion which has been revealed through natural processes. Questions about revelation, then, reduce themselves to very simple

terms. Has God ever revealed himself? This is but another way of asking whether there has ever been a creature who has been made conscious of a divine reality and illuminated by a divine light.

What is the method of revelation? It must be the process by which the faculties of the soul have been developed into the power to comprehend truth. What are the limits of revelation? They are the limits of knowing and feeling.

I have said feeling as well as knowing, for without this much that is most characteristic in man's nature would be ignored. It is said that the finite mind cannot comprehend the Infinite,—a truism which cannot be denied. The doors of the understanding are not wide enough nor its roof lofty enough to take in the Absolute Being, and every effort at intellectual inclusiveness has been a fresh demonstration of this. The God whose nature has been defined, and all whose ways have been declared with logical precision, is something less than the power which controls the universe. But, when with baffled understanding we say we have no faculties through which the Infinite may reveal himself, we do injustice to ourselves.

REVELATION THROUGH LOVE.

What are the limits of the emotions of the heart? What is the limit of love? Continually it transcends knowledge. It is an over-arching sky,

not a narrow house. "Neither height nor depth, nor things present nor things to come," are recognized as its appointed bounds. The greatness of its object does not daunt love.

"Her faith is fixed and cannot move,
She darkly feels him great and wise,
She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
'I cannot understand. I love.'"

And what are the limitations of worship? It begins with what is near, but it goes on till it loses itself in excess of light. The idea of Deity is continually enlarged and spiritualized. The image which the stone-cutter made is outgrown, and so are the successive images of the system-makers; but, when all symbols fail, the holy emotion which used each in turn is liberated, not destroyed. Upon the shattered idols and ruined temples the worshipper stands, adoring a God too great to be defined in words or circumscribed by thought.

REVELATION THROUGH COURAGE.

Courage, too, is an attribute of man which transcends the limitations which the positive philosophers insist upon. The will has an affinity for the boundless. In vain you draw the line beyond which we must not go. Your little system lasts only till the first strong man comes; and he pushes it aside, and goes on his way. In vain you tell him not to venture into the unknown. To Columbus the tales of a sea of darkness are but incen-

tives. The brave human spirit, like the Divine Spirit, dwells in the darkness as in the light. There is a faith which is pure courage. It delights in the symbols of immensity,—the mountain, the sky, and the sea. Infinitude is the vital element which it breathes. Whitman expresses this daring faith when he writes:—

“Sail forth, steer for deep waters only,
Reckless, O Soul, exploring I with thee and thou with me.
For we are bound where mariner has not dared to go,
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.
O my brave soul,
O farther, farther sail!”

REVELATION THROUGH CONSCIENCE.

And conscience is not content with the narrow circle of things seen; and the significant fact is that never has its voice such absolute authority and never do men so unhesitatingly obey it as when it rises farthest above the region of commonplace expediency. The teacher of prudential morality gathers around him a few pupils, who listen respectfully to his words; but, when the prophet comes proclaiming a transcendent holiness, the people's hearts are stirred. He bargains not for half the life, but demands all. He points out no smooth way, but chooses that which is most difficult; and men believe in him, because they believe in the infinitude of righteousness.

MAN THE TRUE SON OF THE UNIVERSE.

The loving, reverent, courageous man has appeared not once as a strange apparition, but every age and land has seen him. He is either an accident or a revelation.

If the universe is but the result of the play of blind forces, if its laws imply no purpose, if the necessity by which things come to pass is altogether material and never rises into the spiritual, then the man who loves and aspires is a being not merely supernatural, but anti-natural. His existence is in defiance of the universal order. He stands in terrifying isolation. His greatness is his doom. Awakened to consciousness, he finds nothing lasting that is akin to himself. That which is most excellent is least permanent. Form outlives spirit, and power outlasts purpose. Space is infinite, but mind is a fleeting phantom. The atoms are eternal, but the soul is only for a day.

But these despairing paradoxes need but to be stated to be confuted, for the reign of law is not broken by the advent of man. There are no accidents. The universe claims its child. If in a single heart love rules, then is not the universe altogether loveless. When the human consciousness is brought within the realm of law, it becomes the interpreter of that law, revealing its higher possibilities and spiritual reaches. There is "a

law of the spirit of life,"—a law by which the spirit lives. The wisdom of Plato and the love of the Christ belong to the great order of the universe, and in turn throw light upon that order. They are not isolated or meaningless facts. They are manifestations of a perennial power.

"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." This is the natural effect of the good works we see. We trace them to their source, and from the stream we judge of the fountain-head. This is the method always of simple piety. Paul speaks of "the righteousness of faith," but there is also a faith of righteousness. It comes to him

"Who makes his love
The ladder of his faith, and climbs above
On the rounds of his best instincts, draws no line
Between mere human goodness and divine,
But, judging God by what in him is best,
With a child's trust leans upon a Father's breast."

Faith in the revelation of God in man reconciles the religious and the humanitarian impulses which too often have stood in antagonism. If, to listen to the voice of God, one must stand aloof from man, then sympathy and sanctity are opposing terms. A loneliness enters into friendship itself, and love is chilled by the shadow of the inevitable parting. John Henry Newman well says: "We know that even our dearest friends enter into us but partially and hold intercourse with us but at times.

Whereas the consciousness of a perfect and enduring Presence, and it alone, keeps the heart open."

Here is the need of the spiritual life. It cannot be satisfied with a transient good: it seeks the Presence that endures. For this men in the past have left friends and all the common business of life, and in the desert have devoted themselves to ceaseless prayer. Surely, they said, when our minds have been cleansed from all that belongs to time, we shall become conscious of the eternal. When all that is human becomes indifferent to us, then will God be all in all.

It is the voice of a nobler piety which calls us to its service. It says: "What the saints of old declared is true. Only in the eternal is peace. You need the consciousness of an enduring Presence. But it is not to be sought afar. It is that which gives the light to your home, the meaning to your thought, the purpose to your will. There is something that endures in life, in love,—it is the Divine Life in ours.

THE CHRIST.

THE CHRIST.

BY REV. ALBERT WALKLEY.

“ART thou he that should come, or do we look for another?” is a question asked by every earnest heart; for we to-day, like John of old, have our hours of darkness and of doubt. Is He the fulfilment of humanity’s hopes, or do we look to the future for another, who shall best reveal us to ourselves? Can He stand the keenest criticism, and win the purest love? Does He come to us with an ideal bright as the light and cheering as the deepest human affections,—an ideal quickening the mind and warming the heart,—or do we look for another? Or is our whole search in vain, one of the delusions? Neither He nor another past, present, or to come is the One longed for. Is it so? Head, heart, history, and the individual life have asked the question.

John received an indirect answer to his question. He was pointed to the doings of Jesus. Let them speak. Whether or not he was satisfied we cannot say. We, too, to-day, though encompassed by clouds of criticism, by an atmosphere surcharged with logic, are to find the answer to our

question in the *doings* of Jesus. What has he done in the world? What has he done for us?

Whether or not he is the one who was to come, he has not only "ploughed" his name into the history of this world, but poured his life into an expiring world, so that he is its breath of life. And he became the life of the world by becoming the life of those who as individuals found in him the words of eternal life. These, whether mistaken or not, believed themselves transformed in mind and heart through the Christ. They believed themselves to have undergone a change equal to a new creation. To these persons, if to no one else, this personal communion with the Christ was real. For them to live was Christ. They lived,—yet not they, but Christ lived in them. There are those who have a like faith to-day.

THE QUESTION.

The question, therefore, What think ye of Christ, whose son is he? was to men of this belief of the supremest concern. It was the question of all the ages. As this Christ-life, this spirit of holiness, grew in them, knit them into a unit, which they believed to be the body of which Christ was the head, the Church, they could only feel that the answer to their great question should match it in "God-becoming" dignity. The answer, therefore, was not given in a day. It was lived out and wrought out through many generations of Chris-

tians; and, while they were years of struggle with doubt and persecutions, they were years of growth in Christian consciousness. The Church aimed, as indeed all must, with great difficulty, to give intellectual form to the heart's life. The answer given lives before us. No step was taken in a corner, but in the full view of men and in the clear daylight. It was acted out. We see it rather than hear it. It began with the answer of the neighbors, and really ended with the Nicene Creed. It is, however, no objection to this action-answer that we so plainly see it. The rose comes from the root, but it is no objection to the rose that roots and branches are not rose. The answer of the neighbors cannot rightly make against the answer of the Nicene Fathers, unless it be also good reasoning to say that, because the rose is more than the root, therefore it is not a rose.

THE ANSWER.

The neighbors of Jesus put into one sentence both their question and answer: "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and of Joses and of Jude and Simon; and are not his sisters here with us?" This answer has never really been disputed. It is the answer of the life untouched by the power of the Christ. It has received due place in the full answer; for, practically, there is no wavering in theology in its allegiance to the humanity of the Christ. This much,

if nothing more, is beyond revision. Jesus was genuinely man. Through creeds of doubt and clouds of fear this one thing is settled. Jesus is so completely human that, if we pray to him at all, we may appeal to him through his human experiences. By thy birth, baptism, fasting, and temptation, by thy agony and bloody sweat, by thy cross and passion, by thy death and burial, we pray thee. In our early Gospels we ever find him conscious of human limitations and of his absolute dependence on God. He is ever touched by the deepest human sympathy, ever capable of the severest human sufferings, a soul exceeding sorrowful even unto death. The feeblest child of earth felt not more its dependence on God than did this strong son of man. From his first word to his bitter prayer in the Garden and his despairing cry on the cross, it is the human voice we hear. All through his being this conscious dependence goes. He was indeed very man, and as such has always won man's profoundest reverence. They were pronounced heretics who, not content with the simple faith which declared him man, taught that the Christ was too holy to come in contact with vile human flesh.

JESUS, THE SOURCE.

This carpenter was the root out of which the new tree grew. He was the source of the new life,—that is, in history,—the source which came within human range. No apostle dreamed of himself as

the author of this new life, least of all Paul, who was not a creative genius, but one who grasped with power what was already created, and gave it strongest utterance. No Jesus, no Paul. The eyes of Christians were fixed upon the Christ. In him was their glory. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

It may all have been a delusion; yet the men who believed in the Christ thought themselves new creatures, and in the strength of that faith lived and died, and living and dying changed the whole face of earth. A similar faith to-day gives a like moral power. However clouded, there is power in a strong faith in the Christ. This seems so apparent that it does not admit of discussion.

But is man the real source of this great moral power, enkindling a human and divine enthusiasm? was a question early asked, and one which received many answers. This much at first: the new rabbi was a teacher approved of God. This his doings made manifest. He became somewhat more to those who often heard him in sweet discourse and felt his power while it was yet veiled with flesh. To them he was the Messiah who was to establish the kingdom of Israel. He was to manifest himself in power, and reign gloriously over the Lord's people. Poor Peter's heart, like many a heart in every day, thrilled with this new hope, only to be crushed to bleeding under the rebuke of the Messiah, who was to conquer through suffering.

After the suffering, after the passion and cross, the disciples awoke to a truer conception of the Messiahship. Peter, who so boldly repudiated the suffering Messiah, proclaimed the crucified one as the Lord's anointed.

Like the process which not seldom goes on in the Christian heart now as ever is that WHICH we see in our first three Gospels. There is a struggle through darkness of surroundings and blindness of heart to come at the meaning of this man. But neither our hearts in their struggles nor our Gospels are always the best media through which to see the Christ. They give us a distorted image. They fail to give full value to moral power. They put the Christ too low. There is a misunderstanding of his sayings and doings, a blindness through the very excess of light. In Gospels and in the heart new touched by the power of the Christ we see an unfolding. In both we have the seed or peeping plant, not the full grown thought.

In history and in life the way to the full Christ-thought must be cleared through great struggle with many questions and many answers. And often it happens that in both processes, of history and of individual life, we ask, Did the disciples and do our hearts give of their power to him, clothe him with titles and honors not his, lift him to the throne, idealize, transfigure him, pour their warm blood, red with purest affection, into his life, so that he lives, or did he transform us (disciples

of all times), pour his rich blood into our lives, quicken us into newness of life? If we appeal to our own experience, we must answer, It is Christ *in us* the hope of glory. This was the answer in the past. It is the answer in the present. And we know no process as yet by which we can get back of this answer and overturn it. It must at least stand until we can arraign our deepest experiences before some higher tribunal than is yet furnished us.

THE HUMAN IDEAL.

Paul, who knew not Jesus, the man of flesh, somehow put no great stress on the particular sayings or doings of Jesus, but all on the new power of holiness which proceeded from him. He was a captive to the personality of the Christ. To Paul Christ was the head of the new and real humanity. The first Adam represented physical man. The Christ was the second Adam, who brought to fullness spiritual humanity.

Seemingly into this new humanity Deity could, through the Christ, breathe His life in full quickening power,—a thing not possible with the humanity of flesh and blood alone. Thus an ideal entered our world. It was the perfect ideal. It was life-giving. The Christ was the perfect divine type, which was to repeat itself in every believing heart. This ideal was to displace all other ideals, and subject everything to itself. The disciple was to know only Christ; and from this

Christ nothing in life or death, joy or sorrow, heaven or earth, was to separate him. It was an ideal surpassing comprehension, but revealing to the heart the fulness of God in His love for humankind. It was not only to be reached after, but it alone gave the strength by which the feeblest heart could repeat the surpassing image in itself. It was the power as well as the love of God.

Paul did not create this new thing. He claimed that he found it in the person of the Christ, and that person lived as man in Palestine and as the Christ in Paul's life. This at least Paul believed. There is no wavering of allegiance to the humanity of Christ in Paul. For him and for the Church the source of all is Jesus. Not to Pharisee or philosopher, Paul or Plato, but to the carpenter, Jesus, do we look.

On the human side this spiritual ideal gives a new and inspiring syllogism. The old syllogism stood:—

Moses (or other ideals) had all that was essential to our humanity.

Moses sinned.

Therefore, sin is essential to our nature.

The new and uplifting syllogism runs thus:—

Jesus as very man had all that is essentially human.

Jesus was sinless.

Therefore, sin is not an essential part of human nature.

THE DIVINE IDEAL.

But, if this new ideal was to displace all other ideals in heaven above and earth beneath, what was it? If the Christ might demand love for love, sacrifice for sacrifice, purest worship and supreme obedience, how near to God was he? Could Deity ask more of men than did this new Power? He was, answered one voice, the Word of God, the God-reason-and-will in the flesh. How near to Deity does that bring him? Earnest hearts now, as the Church hundreds of years ago had to, wrestle with this problem of the spiritual life. No text, no miracle, no saying, however bold from Master or disciple, could settle it; nor can they to-day. "No man can say Jesus is Lord but in the Holy Ghost." It is a matter of life, and the answer is true only for that life out of which in glowing earnestness it may come.

THE IDEAL PUT INTO LANGUAGE.

The spiritual quickening was in the early day, as to-day, "a marvellous phenomenon, a morality that had nothing to do with selfish or worldly aims, . . . and which went out to all men in love." Men gave their lives not for the truth of their doctrine alone, but for love of their kind. They saw in Christ a new humanity, one to be loved, and for which it was even possible to die. Where and what was the source of this new power? The

Church found no text in its Scriptures, Old or New, which definitely answered the question. Yet it was compelled, as every new awakened heart now, to give intellectual shape to this new stirring to holiness, and new power which helped to holiness. What did this new consciousness mean, whence this fresh glowing idea of humanity, whence this power to speak and die for the right, and to lay one's self on the altar in love for those who hate you? And this, too, though you yourself be a castaway. It was not from an idea, an abstract thing, but a person, this power came. With eyes of love and hearts aglow, the Church looked to Jesus as the author and finisher of this great work. It never denied he was the carpenter; but was not the carpenter the means through which the Highest uttered himself? An agony of thought and a fierce struggle of language are manifest in the early Church, as believers tried to think out and speak out the life so full of joy unspeakable and power beyond degree. The heart felt the new divine power which came from the Christ. Now could the head think it out, and language put it into "I believe?" Already the Christ was "the word made flesh"; but how near, how much of God did that mean? The Church tried in the Nicene Creed the experiment of putting this new power into intellectual shape, and succeeded more in saying what the Life was not than in clearly defining what it was. For it was manifest that, only as the new

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Life manifested itself in the individual, could he come to any comprehension of the language in which the Church tried to utter itself. It was not then, nor is it now, a matter of historical criticism, but of the mouth speaking out of the fulness of a heart born into the Christian consciousness. It was and is a simple explanation of the Christ-life in them. If that Life were not there, then there was no need of explanation.

Clouds of doubt gathered around the early centuries. The Life was long in taking any clear intellectual shape. The fourth century came, and yet the sun was clouded. Many answers had come into the heavens, only to fade before the sun as clouds in the morning. One heavy cloud long darkened the morning sky of Christian history; but it, too, faded out of the creed of the Church. And henceforth for the Church Christ was no demigod, a being neither God nor man. The Church declared definitely for the unity of God, and that He in His own person manifested Himself to and dealt directly with His children. It was a great spiritual triumph for man.

There is a daring to the Church's answer to the old question, What think ye of Christ, whose son is he? There is an audacity to it born of the conscious Presence of God. With all its faults, nothing surpasses the so-called Nicene Creed in daring faith, in supreme trust of enlightened human reason, and in absolute confidence in the soul's

deepest and boldest intuitions. There is something appalling in this answer made by the Church. It did not say Christ is higher than man and a little lower than God. It did not say that perfect man was God or lesser God was man, but in an hour of supreme audacity it said that Christ was man in fulness and God in fulness expressed in terms of our humanity. It did not pretend to reconcile this bold contradiction as it seems to the understanding. It put faith in the power of the spiritual man to reconcile this, the simplest of the contradictions in the spiritual life. It held fast to man as man and to God as God, and yet said of the Christ God-man. It made the two words one, and so has let them stand. All this is something the Christian heart feels to-day; for, when it draws near the Christ in prayer, it uses earth's terms of endearment, and yet is never conscious of offering prayer to other than God. In such an hour the mind, under the control of the heart touched by Christian love, is untroubled by metaphysical puzzles or man-made mysteries. To the heart which has felt the new Life it is not a strange thing that God should manifest himself in some way within the heart's power to grasp Him. Nor to such a heart is there anything lowering to Deity, should He once in history definitely utter Himself in our terms, our speech, our thought, our sympathies, and, if need be, our sufferings. It sees not so much a humiliation of Deity in Christ, whether

speaking, healing, or suffering, as it does the very core of divine glory,—the glory of a God who is love. It sees in the limitation of Omnipotence the perfection of Omnipotence. In all this whatever mystery there may be is the mystery of love. But mystery is not darkness: it is twilight. And the speech of the believer in Christ is finite language reeling with infinite meaning, God-intoxicated language. Cold facts, like mathematics, may be put into precise terms; but living facts, full of new warm blood of hearts enkindled by divine enthusiasm, break language up into shapes which tell of the richness of the Christ-life and of the poverty of speech. These broken symbols only call attention to where the Life is rather than express that Life.

Church Fathers said unpolluted God, though in human form; Christ the stainless mirror of the working of God, the softened glory of the Father. They found great difficulty in making the finite say infinite things. And in their attempts in this direction they used at times the terms at hand in their Greek life. We find them putting their philosophers under tribute to supply them with intellectual forms. The philosophers did them good service. They brought in the pots filled with water to be changed into Christian wine. It sometimes happens that we are occupied in classifying the vessels without tasting of the wine. We imagine that this is all-sufficient. The Greek gave

the Church the terms. The Christian consciousness of the Church gave the terms their life.

THE IDEAL ETHICAL AND INCARNATE.

One going over this ground either in church history or in his own life is conscious of a wandering from the simple carpenter. The great terms do not seem to fit him. Yet we are compelled to look back to this carpenter, and refer the source of the new Life to him. We cannot say Jesus, we cannot say Christ, and keep the words apart. They link themselves together, Jesus Christ. But with the Christian Life comes a new idea of power, of greatness. "Thy gentleness hath made me great." All power is moral and spiritual. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit." God Himself becomes the ethical ideal, whose greatness is in His holiness, whose omnipotence is in His righteousness, whose glory is in His love. Morality comes to mean a true personal relation. Religion comes to mean a true personal relation to God. The whole Christian atmosphere is filled with personalities, not things, ideals rather than ideas. The sinless Jesus becomes the centre of this Christian world of ideals. He becomes the supreme ethical ideal in human history. So there was no figure of speech when he spake of seeing the Father when men beheld him. And the Church was right when it refused to make a distinction between the incarnation of the ethical ideal on earth and that ideal

everywhere. It did not say that the incarnation of this ideal was *like* God, was of a *like* substance with God, but that it was God, the *same* substance, the very essence of His Being. Beyond this there is no need of going; for it is with the moral, not as an idea, but as an ideal, not as a thing, but as a person, we have really to do.

The Christian, since this triumph of faith in the old creed, feels he lives in a moral universe, which arose out of righteousness and whose end is holiness. And deeper, he feels that it rose out of the life and by the will of a righteous and holy God, to whom it is to return, and that this truth is definitely revealed in the sinless Jesus, the incarnation of the ethical ideal. He reads the universe in the light of the Christ.

THE INCARNATION OF THE IDEAL IN BELIEVERS.

It is possible in working out this great side of Christian thought and life that the Church and the believing heart to-day have forgotten that the very object for which the Christ lived was that the ideal might ever repeat itself in the hearts of believers, and that there, too, it was very God. How the words come to us with reproaches! "My little children, let no man lead you astray: he that doeth righteousness is righteous even as he is righteous"; "partakers of the divine nature"; "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ"; "one as we are one"; "I am the vine, ye are the branches." And

the apostle who speaks of Christ as the fulness of the Godhead bodily also speaks of believers as being filled with the same fulness.

In hours of boldness the Church has spoken of its members as the larger body, the full and continuous incarnation. But we seem to falter and to turn our faces again to condemned Arianism, and question whether, after all, we are not *like* the Christ, *like* the Father, instead of claiming our right that whatever of righteousness and holiness there is to us is of the very substance of the Father and his Christ. It is the same old mystery, the same divine faith, the same sublime hope,—God-man.

THE USE OF A LITURGY IN WORSHIP.

THE USE OF A LITURGY IN WORSHIP.

BY REV. JOHN TUNIS.

A LITURGY is a form of public worship. It defines the permanent manner of performing the services of the church. A liturgy is composed of the special offices of devotion, and brings together in organic relation the various forms of administering public worship. The word "office," as applied to a public function, expresses the idea of the liturgy. An office is something "that is laid upon or taken up by one person to perform for another." It is peculiar because as a work done it has reference to the advantage or the edification of another. We speak of the office of the teacher, and mean the work done at the instance of others and for their profit and advantage. So an office of religion is some work done, some transaction carried on in the interest of others, by officers who are responsible to those for whom their office is performed. It is a pity that such a significant word is coming more and more to be narrowed down to the humble and rather vulgar usage of a situation or of the room in which a man's business is hurried through. In such a use as "the office for the burial of the

dead," there is a meaning that is deeper and fuller, to say the least, than anything which the broker or the merchant means by "my office." A liturgy is an office or the offices of worship performed by certain servants or ministers or priests, as a special and sacred trust for others to whom they are ministering.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LITURGY AND A RITUAL.

A liturgy is still further to be discriminated from a kindred idea. A liturgy is also called a rite, as the rite of marriage. Rites are properly the ceremonies, or forms of observance, that accompany a liturgy. The rite of baptism is the act, or set of acts, that consecrates the child at the font, administered through prayer and vows and the sprinkling with water in the name of Almighty God. The ritual consists properly of the prescribed forms of conducting worship. Both rite and liturgy are a good deal confounded, just because they are the different elements included in the same office. The liturgy is the spoken side of the same thing of which the ritual is the acted side. The ritual is acted out or performed. The liturgy is spoken or, better still, rendered. Taken together, the ritual, or the acted part, and the liturgy, or the printed and spoken part, make up the office. The office denotes not only the service, but the special servant, also, to whom the service is delegated as a trust.

It is important to have these distinctions clearly in mind, for then a good many minor matters settle themselves and many difficulties disappear. Then it becomes clear that a liturgy which a man makes for himself is an absurdity. The self-constituted liturgist is at war with the first principles of a liturgy, for this has reference to a person or persons to whom the service is delegated on behalf of others. The liturgy is a trust, not a religious speculation. It is a thing imposed, not an affair of enterprise. The enthusiast who in his first charge rushes into the compilation of *A New Liturgy for All Christians* or a *New Prayer Manual* violates the first principle of the liturgical idea, that the worshipper is chosen to the liturgy, and not the liturgy to the worshipper.

HUMILITY NEEDED.

Then, again, the religious attitude of worshippers ought to be frankly considered. A liturgy is not possible for all worshippers.

This is unfortunate, but it is the plain truth. There are kinds of worship, sincere and heartfelt, too, but which absolutely forbid any liturgical restraints. A liturgy belongs to a certain religious attitude. It demands a certain religious belief. It is hostile to certain other religious attitudes and other beliefs. A uniformity of rite and liturgy for modes of worships absolutely diverse in their whole attitude of mind is an impossibility.

The liturgy implies something which is resisted by radical religion. The liturgy takes for granted an attitude of humility, and begins with the assumption that the worshipper is prepared to confess his sins. Therefore, where an attitude of humility is not found, and where it is protested against and disbelieved in, a liturgy is a quite inappropriate vehicle of expression for religious feeling. A liturgy cannot be an æsthetic product. It is a religious act of contrition.

THE RESTRAINING POWER OF A LITURGY.

A liturgy is a safeguard against the excessive and morbid and despairing sense of sin. It curbs in the human spirit, and keeps its sorrow for wrong-doing from the wild extremes which are only too natural to those who feel intensely with Dr. Newman that "there are two, and two only, luminously self-evident beings, myself and my creator." It is penetrated through and through with the ideas of sin and repentance and sacrifice. Now, a religion which is without these ideas, and which speaks only of trust, though vaguely, and of hope, though timidly, and perhaps of resignation, does not require any such safeguards. The ideas of trust and hope and resignation are not energetic ideas. Under the lead of the emotions which they inspire, one is not tempted to pass the bounds of reason. In themselves they are weak ideas. I am simply stating a fact, without criticism of

any sort. The ideas of trust and hope and resignation are in themselves weak ideas. The ideas of sin and repentance and forgiveness and sacrifice are all very intense and energetic ideas. They are ideas which drive men to madness. They sweep human souls away in their passion. They need, therefore, to be carefully watched and restrained. Men torture themselves, and mothers offer up that which is dearer than their own lives,—their children,—as a sacrifice to the dreadful demands of the Being whose anger is to be appeased. It is the horror of the history of religion that the ideas of sin and sacrifice have made men undergo willingly the most frightful pains and torments and mutilation. Persecutions have never done any more than men have done of their own free will. Men have inflicted on themselves in a spirit of penance more horrible tortures than the Inquisition. There is nothing new in the pains of the Inquisition to one who understands the strength of these ideas of religion, sin, and sacrifice. They are strong ideas. They make men do voluntarily greater, harder, and more painful acts than any other ideas of human reason.

That it is necessary, then, to put on the expressions of these ideas every possible check and restraint, is perfectly clear. They must be governed by a strict law, and must be kept from extravagance. They must be held in by an order of worship. The single man cannot be left to himself.

It must be a common act, a form of public and general worship. This is the meaning of a liturgy, that it is the public exercise of religion. It is based on the intensely passionate ideas of sin and sacrifice. These ideas must be put under the curb of law. Their expression must conform to an order. They must be observed in common, and their common and orderly and public expression is a liturgy.

On the other hand, the simpler and paler ideas of trust and hope and resignation require no checks or safeguards. They are in danger of no extravagance. Any man can be trusted to have them and voice them without the necessity of any restraint from other men. They will have a secondary influence over his life, but they will never have a pernicious influence. In themselves they are not expanding ideas. They attain to a very slight development. They are still ideas, beautiful, transparent, but quiescent. In their very nature they do not need a liturgy, nor are they strong enough to carry one. These simple and transparent ideas cannot bear the weight of a liturgy. The armor of defence, so indispensable for the strong, energetic ideas of sin and sacrifice, is a crushing burden on the meeker forms of hope and trust.

Wherever, then, religion is full of the passion of sin and sacrifice, it will demand a liturgy; for without a liturgy its religion would be lawless. Wherever, on the other hand, religion has to do

with the simpler matters of hope and trust, it will not endure a liturgy; for it would fall under the weight of such an armor. Its worship will be an affair of the individual man, and a common form or order of worship will take altogether too much for granted. The liturgy stands for law, order, and government; and the absence of a liturgy stands for individuality and for isolation faith. Faith in common, the religion that seeks to become an institution, will need a liturgy. Dissent and individualism will resist one.

REASONS FOR A LITURGY.

There are many minor reasons for a liturgy. A great deal can be said for it on the score of decorum. It is in good taste. It is a barrier against vulgarity. It enriches the service. It enables the congregation to take part in the service. It interests the children. It is democratic, and puts rich and poor on a common level. It cultivates the habit of worship, and develops insensibly an attachment to the Church. It is a relief to the overpreached congregation. Probably these considerations could be multiplied indefinitely. They are all weighty. They are all proved true before men's eyes every day. Yet, as reasons in themselves, they are artificial and external. They are utilitarian. The idea which has developed the liturgy, however, is something vastly more serious than utility. The liturgy is the sober and orderly

and safe expression of the religion of sacrifice. To dress up a religion which does not take its key-note from sacrifice, but from human kindness, is an insincere use of a very solemn aid. It is plain that worship, if it can be called a worship, that is humanitarian, must be carefully distinguished from a worship that is sacrificial and divine. On the grounds of utility I do not defend the liturgy. I doubt the sincerity of using a sacrificial aid for a non-sacrificial religion. A charge of trifling is only too well founded then. A liturgy belongs to a certain Christian doctrine. It is out of keeping where that Christian doctrine is absent. We may employ a liturgy to give decorum and stateliness to an affair of sentiment, but it will never take root. It will be a kaleidoscopic confusing of prayers and canticles and responses, and there will be no one animating idea. It will be altered to suit each man's preferences. It will be doctored to express each man's prejudices. It will be the price of novelty. It will not be the glory of devotion. Because it is itself the outcome of unrest, it will be the victim of the speedy prey of the spirit of disquietude.

A LITURGY FULL OF CHRIST.

But a liturgy that is full of the spirit of Christ is a different matter. That liturgy recognizes the idea of sacrifice. It is not the lawless spirit of sacrifice which one finds prevailing in India. It is

not the sacrifice of fear, such as savages may have. It is the Christian idea of sacrifice, the sacrifice of love. If the Christian Church centres around the name and sacrifice of Christ, so the liturgy centres around the name and sacrifice of Christ. It must be penitential in its character, because it must be a penitential plea for forgiveness. It must be a deep sadness for sin and a great triumph for the love that takes away all sin. It means through and through the love—that is, the sacrifice—of Christ. It is this idea, and not decorum or good taste, which gives the liturgy its force. A liturgy is distinctly worship in his name. It tries to realize what that love was which could humble itself to such lowly offices on earth. Through the love and sacrifice of Christ it sees the love and pity of God expressing itself. But such love shows by contrast man's lovelessness: such compassion shows by contrast man's contempt. It drives home to men what manner of men they are. It awakens the sense of sin. It brings contrition. It is an appeal for forgiveness. It waits for a word of absolution. It breaks forth into praise. It listens meekly to the lessons containing the story of God's dealings with men, and to the explanations of and exhortations to duty. The liturgy is a whole in itself. It is the working out of our organic idea. It is orderly and varied, but order and variety are not enough to make a liturgy. It is a religious idea alone that can make a liturgy.

The liturgy will reflect the minds of the worshippers. It will be what the religious idea lets it be,—superstitious if the religious idea is superstitious, rational if the religious idea is rational; but one religious idea there must penetrate the whole. That one idea is the idea of sacrifice. It is a dangerous and purposeless and extravagant idea as Buddhism presents it. It is a safe and inspiring and divine idea as Christianity presents it. But a liturgy which is merely in good form is a house of cards, and will fall asunder at a touch.

I hold that the reason why a liturgy cannot be extemporized is something more than a literary reason. It is not merely that the Prayer Book was translated and abridged from the Roman Breviary and the Missal, at a time when the English language was rich and flexible and rhythmic with the emotional elation and excitement that filled all the land. The Prayer Book was born in a period of trust and of simple belief. The idea that makes a liturgy, the idea of sacrifice, entered heartily at that time into the people's life. To make the Prayer Book of Edward VI., it was necessary only to organize the loosely jointed special offices of the Roman Church, and simplify and purify it into a liturgy. It was done by a commission, but it was under the influence of the sacrificial idea. It was not the literature of the Elizabethan era, but the piety and the spiritual energy of that era. Before a liturgy can be enriched, we must enrich our-

selves. There must be some reason for there being a liturgy at all. A good style is not in itself an aim for a liturgy. Good taste will not do it. There must be a strong, clear belief seeking freely and simply a noble expression.

I have tried so far to show what the underlying idea of a liturgy is. I have tried to show what religious ideas cannot make use of liturgical forms, and which, if forced into such a use, never become really naturalized to it; also that a liturgy is a common possession, and that it expresses a common, not an individual, belief. It is an act of conformity to a general practice, and a liturgy is not friendly to dissent. Before these results are brought to bear on the possibility of a liturgy for Unitarian churches, I wish to give in brief the story of that liturgy with which we are most familiar, and from which we most naturally draw, the liturgy of the English Church.

GROWTH OF LITURGIES.

The beginning of the Christian liturgies is found in the germ in a sentence of Saint Paul. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians he says: "How is it then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying." In the humblest gatherings of Christians then there was felt the need of satisfying the different elements of

worship. At a very early date phrases and sentences and prayers were singled out as the fittest expression of certain truths and the fittest accompaniments of certain acts of worship. The language of these parts of worship set and became fixed. Just as words give name and fixity to thoughts, so the expressions of worship give name and fixity to the vague stream of devotion. Such formulas may be found in the New Testament as the formulas of baptism and of benediction and of the administration of the sacraments. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew xxviii. 19), is one of these. The Lord's Prayer was appropriated for habitual use in the public worship. A confession of faith was soon elaborated. The Apostles' Creed belongs to a much later time than the apostles, but a legend about its composition gives a hint of how the whole service was formed. Each of the apostles, it was said, added a clause to the creed until all was complete. The creed was probably of slow growth. Its final form is very different. It probably arose by a gradual accumulation of felicitous expressions of the elements of Christian belief. Now, the liturgy arose by a gradual accumulation of felicitous expressions of the elements of Christian worship.

There sprang up what in time became five families or groups of liturgies. These are named after

the places which were the principal seat of their respective uses. These five liturgical systems are, accordingly, the liturgies of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Edessa, Ephesus, and Rome. Remember that these are all groups of liturgies. All the members of a group, named respectively after the cities of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Edessa, Ephesus, and Rome, bear a strong common likeness. Each group corresponds to a special type of early Christianity, and belongs to a special race of Christians. Each group is besides named with some apostle or saint. Thus the Jerusalem group is named by the apostle James, the Alexandrian group by the evangelist Mark, the Syrian, or Edessa, group by the saint Adæus, the Ephesian group by the apostle Saint John, and, lastly, the Roman group by the apostle Peter.

LITURGY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

The first liturgy used in the British Isles was of a Celtic type, and belongs unmistakably, we are told, to the liturgy of Ephesus. When Augustine was sent to England by Gregory the Great in 597 A.D., he brought naturally the ideas and practices of Rome. He felt soon the need of a liturgy to bring into order the desultory worship of the Britons. The Roman liturgy, so introduced, underwent many important changes. Perhaps the most interesting of these is the use of the common Saxon speech in the rubrics and miscellaneous

entries. In this Saxon liturgy were found also elements which are due to the Gallican liturgy; and so for the second time the English Church was using liturgical forms taken from the Ephesus group, for, like the Celtic, the Gallican liturgy is traced back to the liturgies of Ephesus. In all the dioceses different practices and forms prevailed, and this in spite of the general consolidation of the English Church in 673 A.D. under Theodore, the Archbishop of Canterbury. For nearly nine centuries there was no attempt made to enforce uniformity in England. The different forms of service in use in different parts of the country were called "Uses," such as the "Use of Sarum," which is practically the liturgy of the English Church and the source of our Book of Common Prayer.

In this way the change was made. Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury, or Sarum, two miles from the present Salisbury, made a revision of the service books at the opening of the cathedral. This was in 1258. The revised service was known as the Use of Sarum, and was appropriated in other dioceses. There were other compilations or Uses, such as the Uses of Bangor, York, and Hereford; but Osmund's "Use of Sarum" was the most successful, and became the prevailing liturgy for nearly five hundred years. The language was still the Latin. The Anglo-Saxon liturgy, with its Saxon rubrics, had been superseded, of course, after the conquest.

In 1547 Edward VI. became king. An order of convocation passed in 1542, "that a chapter of the Bible should be read in English at Morning and Evening Prayer on Sundays and Holy Days," was repeated by Edward's royal proclamation. Besides this it was ordered that the Epistle and Gospel at High Mass should be read in English. It was at this time also that it was ordered that the cup as well as the consecrated bread should be given to the laity. In 1549 a committee, which had been working since 1542 on a general revision of the service, submitted what is known as the First Prayer Book of Edward VI. For the first time the service was in the language of the people. A considerable opposition was aroused against Edward's Prayer Book. It did not go far enough for the Reformers. It went too far for those who clung to the Roman faith. A second revision was accordingly ordered, and in 1552 there appeared Edward VI.'s second Prayer Book. It was at this time that the forty-two articles of religion were compiled, reduced afterward to the thirty-nine articles of the present Prayer Book.

Queen Mary, the Catholic, succeeded the Protestant Edward; and all the changes of Edward's reign were quickly got rid of. When Elizabeth became queen in 1558, commissioners were appointed to construct out of the two Prayer Books of Edward a suitable liturgy for the English people. A new table of proper lessons was made, and a new

calendar. A second book of Homilies was added to the one prepared under Edward. The forty-nine articles were reduced to thirty-nine. With some modifications, the Prayer Book of Elizabeth is the second Prayer Book of Edward VI. During the rule of Cromwell and the Puritan Revolution the use of the Prayer Book was again suspended. At the Restoration, with many changes, it was again adopted, and became henceforth the rule of worship for the English Church. For two hundred years it remained unchanged. During the reign of Queen Victoria three alterations have been made; but they do not affect the substance of the Prayer Book.

The English Prayer Book and the American edition of the Book of Common Prayer have come down through the reforming Prayer Books of Edward VI., from the "Use of Sarum" of Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury. In the compilation of the "Use of Sarum," the Breviary, the Missal, the Manual, and the Pontifical, according to the Gallican type, were drawn on. The Breviary is an abridgment of the full daily services, one for each of the seven canonical "hours." The Missal is derived from the Roman word "Missa," the Mass, or the communion service, containing in addition to what we generally include under that service the Epistles, the Gospel, and the Collects. The Manual included the minor services of baptism, marriage, and burial. The Pontifical included the confirmation and ordination services. We can now ask, with

hope of having all the bearings of the question understood, Are Unitarian churches able to use a liturgy? If this question can be answered by yes, then the advantages of a liturgy to the Unitarian churches must be considered, then the objections must be met. Lastly, we must ask, What sort of a liturgy ought to be introduced?

A LITURGY AND UNITARIAN CHURCHES.

I have the strongest kind of a feeling that no denomination should attempt to use a liturgy unless religious ideas of that denomination are strong enough to bear such a harness. A liturgy is an element in which certain religious ideas are particularly strong, and in which other religious ideas cannot live at all. I have tried to show that the religious ideas which demand a liturgy are the ideas of sacrifice. A liturgy expresses the faith of a strong personal relation between man and God. If one attempts to express less definite religious ideas in a liturgy, the result is a palpable unfitness. Unitarian churches need a liturgy when the hearts of these people need the faith in sacrifice. Unitarians need a liturgy when the people need the faith in a strong personal relation between man and God. Remember that the liturgies arose with the administration of the Lord's Supper. If this use has been abandoned by any Unitarian church, it would seem that a liturgical service which suggests the Lord's Supper, and which sprang up

around the Lord's Supper, was out of place. It seems like a masquerade. If the religious spirit of any Unitarian church is one of great independence, a liturgy, which breathes the spirit of conformity, and which suggests an order of worship in which many churches are joined, is certainly a mistake. A liturgy requires a doctrine. It is the orderly expression of a doctrine. It is the shrine of a definite faith. Now, if a church is reluctant to accept a definite faith, it will not help itself by any external aid, such as a liturgy. An order of service can never belong to a church whose doctrine is in disorder, or is formless. The outward expression of religion can never be more definite than the inward belief. I am sure that the advantages of a liturgy will be great to any church that can conscientiously employ it, and that has a belief strong enough to bear it; but for any other church its use is in every way undesirable. It is simply vain to heap such an impediment on a congregation whose religious independence and individualistic faith is completely at war with a common order of service and belief. So much for who can and who cannot among Unitarian churches make use of such an aid. To those whose faith is in harmony with the religious aim of a liturgy, to those whose belief is definite, whose belief is centred around the sacrifice of Christ, the advantages of a liturgy are many and great.

THE SERMON AND THE LITURGY.

Preaching is at the same time very much overdone and too poorly done. The congregations are considerably overpreached, and yet are not enough religiously fed. The case is like that of a man who eats too much, and yet whose system is being depleted. The food is not assimilated. There is too much preaching, because the sermon overshadows everything else in the service. There is too little preaching that is assimilated and taken into the soul as a meat and drink on the strength of which one may go many days. The liturgy does not displace the sermon. It finds for it rather its rightful place. It disposes the minds of men to receive favorably what is delivered. It must be plain that nothing is more important in producing conviction than to prepare the way and get the minds of the listeners so sympathetically disposed that, when the speech comes, it finds a favorable reception. Now, commonly, the sermon stands out bare and unrelieved. It has to do double work. It has to overcome men's inertia, if not antagonism. The force of the sermon is gone in getting heard before the heart is ready to be moved, but a liturgy does much to take away the obstacles to the effectiveness of the sermon. It prepares the way for conviction. It brings men's minds into a readiness to assent. It quickens the inertia into attention.

Nothing is more important than the assumption

or the general tenor of mind with which one receives a matter. What has more to do with the successful convincing of others' minds than the spirit in which they receive the fresh words? There is an attitude of persuasibility, and a liturgy promotes it. A liturgy lifts religion to a plane distinctly higher and more alive to worship. It allays passion and opposition. It softens the hardness of men's hearts. It assumes and takes for granted what without that liturgy and atmosphere of worship must be constantly contended for. A liturgy does away silently with much of the necessity of controversy. The absence of the liturgy as surely drags in controversy. With a liturgy much of the common religious argument and debate becomes an impertinence and an intrusion.

The point of view, the general prepossession with which one begins an inquiry, determines largely the result. The end reached depends on the beginning taken. It seems like moving in a circle, and yet the principle is strictly true. The persuasive helps of worship are just what are needed to give the preaching of the churches its rightful note of power. The preaching that is not aided by the service will be able to produce a change of opinion in the listeners' minds, but the preaching that is re-enforced by the atmosphere of worship will effect a change in the whole moral temperament. The one is an intellectual effort, but the other is life.

The larger part of truth is too elusive, impalpable, and transcendental for the medium of words. The words uttered can only suggest the spirit that comes after, and that is greater than they. In poetry there is an atmosphere thrown around the words, an atmosphere in which the bright disk of the sun of truth is molten and poured out again into the forms of heavenly visions, types of the more real worlds that lie beyond our present. Where so much depends on the mental preparation of the hearers, where so much of persuasiveness, of willingness, is the one condition of doing effective pulpit work, it seems little short of mad not to employ such an aid.

The plain truth is that we are acting on a view of man and society that ceased to represent the real state of the case a hundred years ago. Besides, when that view of man and society expressed the needs of the people, it was a wholly exceptional state of affairs. It was a state of affairs existing only for a community that was sheltered from the world at large. In the time of the colonies the congregations were largely made up of earnest and thoughtful people, of whom many had left kindred and this world's prospects to enjoy religious liberty in America. They kept the edge of their religious thought keen because of their own relish for controversy. They listened because they had staked their lives on the privilege of listening to what they desired. Everybody was intent on the Sunday

sermons, because that was the one chance of getting some intelligence as to what was going on in the world. Sunday preaching was the one form of intellectual life open to a people who had no easy communication with the larger world. That was the day when a bridle path was the only land road, and when communication was difficult. When spirits of their measure had been busy during a hard week with planting or logging or building, they were eager to be present at the meeting-house on Sunday; and there they drank in the only spiritual refreshment they could get. They longed to have their minds employed on deep problems. It was the day when there were no morning newspapers, no magazines, no book clubs, no lectures, no theatres, and no easy travelling from place to place. The sermon was the one recreation of their lives, and it was correspondingly important. No one felt it a hardship to have the hour-glass turned once or twice in the course of an attempt to "vindicate the ways of God to man." On the contrary, a good deal of hardship would have been felt if the *discourse* had been cut down to the modern half-hour. The three hours' sermon, which seems monstrous in our eyes, took the place in the minds of an intense people of all the intellectual and spiritual agencies of to-day. These men gathered from their farms and trades. They came to hear. They intended to hear, and to hear everything; and so they did. We have to-day the methods of a hun-

dred years ago for dealing with a time and a people in every essential absolutely different. We are dealing with a world at large, and no longer with a sheltered nook of a peculiar people.

Hearing as a medium for conveying truth is the most unsatisfactory sense of all we have. It requires a trained mind, a mind with considerable leisure, and a mind which is ready and willing to be attentive. It is the sense the soonest tired, and is the most affected by our bodily states. Hearing as a medium of truth belongs to a small and refined and leisurely and studious class. Now, we are seeking to influence men for religion,—men of all classes, learned and unlearned, of the greatest diversity of interests; men distracted by the claims of earning their daily bread, men who have to be coaxed to church, men who go because their wives feel bad at their absence, men who go because of the good example to their children. We are seeking to influence these men by means adapted to a people of a hundred years or more ago, and as different as can be in every way from the men of our day. The use of a liturgy is needed to-day to put men into that same receptive frame of mind to hear spiritual truth which the men of an earlier time had by virtue of their peculiar life of isolation.

Let it be said also that the decorum and order of the service are the best indirect witness to that law and order and government in the universe which it

is the main aim of all preaching to bring men to believe in. The service in which the sermon is set becomes, then, the object-lesson and illustration of the truth taught. There is an indefinable air of authority about a liturgical service. There is a plain limit set to caprice and mere fancy. This is the direct testimony to Him who has "constituted the service of men and of angels in a wonderful order."

A LITURGY AND INDIVIDUALISM.

Now, the great objection to a liturgy has always been inspired by individualism. It is only the utterance out of each man's own conscience that influences men, we are told. The form becomes dead and soulless. Each man must speak out of his own heart. Prayer must arise out of each fresh experience of trust and need of mercy. It is true that it is always the man that counts, but it is no less true that it is the form or rite that perpetuates that man's voice and message. The form or rite is the great man's safeguard, not his hindrance. The form or rite guarantees him all that he accomplishes through water and blood. It saves to him all he struggled to attain. It perpetuates his sacrifice. It establishes what the man stood for, and makes it a lasting possession. There is no real conflict between individualism and wise forms. They are, on the contrary, the best guardians of individuality.

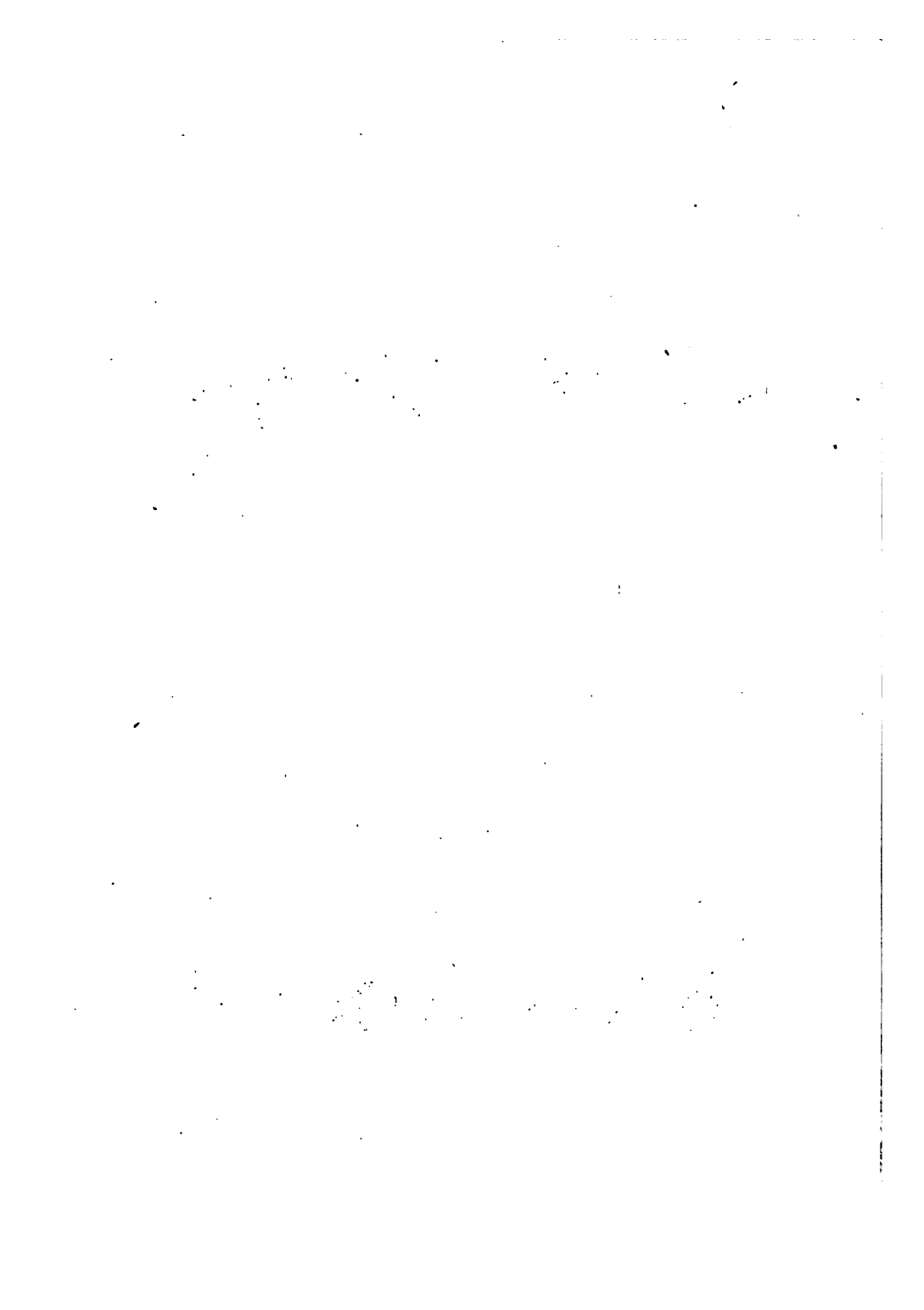
A LITURGY FOR UNITARIAN CHURCHES.

We have now reached the practical question, How is a liturgy to be obtained for such churches as are able to use it? I do not need to repeat the valuable suggestions which the Rev. Henry C. Badger has made in the *Unitarian* in three articles, which appeared in the issues of May, June, and July of 1892. The special needs of Unitarian churches in preparing a liturgy were there set forth with great fulness and appreciation. The question is now a practical one, Shall we use a liturgy? The natural reply is the question, Whose liturgy shall we use? There is the revised liturgy of the Church of England prepared for the use of King's Chapel. There is also the liturgy which has been specially prepared for the use of the Unitarian churches by a large and representative committee. There is no reasonable objection to the King's Chapel liturgy on the ground that it is merely an expurgated edition of the English office. It has been made clear, I trust, that the English office is the last result of a succession of changes. It began as a compilation, and figured as the "Use of Sarum." It was translated and revised and added to to make the Prayer Books of Edward. It has undergone a few important alterations since the time of Edward. A prayer book or a liturgy by the nature of things is a compilation, a process of revisions. That which the English Church could

alter from the Roman the Unitarian Church can as justly alter from the English. If the result expresses the spirit of worship in Unitarian churches, it is as fairly done as for Osmund of Salisbury to prepare the "Use of Sarum," or for the Savoy Conference to prepare the Prayer Book after the Restoration.

The liturgy that will meet with more favor in the Unitarian churches, however, is the form submitted by the Liturgical Committee. The devoted work which has been done in still farther adapting the various liturgical Uses to the spirit of Unitarian churches deserves a generous co-operation. It ought to be received in a generous and open-handed way. It ought not to be the prey for all manner of little captious criticisms, but taken for what it is, as the best possible product of the devotion of the churches. It must not be expected that individual preferences will be satisfied. The aim of a liturgy is to transcend individual preferences. The liturgy is a solvent for merely individual tastes. It is an order of *common prayer*. Individual preferences can be satisfied only in the seclusion of one's chamber. The only questions to be asked are: Is the idea of sacrifice clear and full? Is the revision and editing made in a large and free spirit? Is it free from mere individual preferences and tastes, and does it represent the body of worshippers? Is it done into good English? Is it marked by its own original sense of worship, or is it merely a

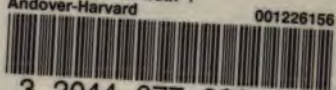
protest against some fuller liturgy? Is it merely critical, and not devotional, personal, and not congregational? These questions will be answered as soon as their work is offered to us by the earnest committee. That they will be answered favorably, no one who has kept informed of the committee's work can for an instant doubt.





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